THE MERRY WIDOW
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SCHOOL OF MUSIC
and
UNIVERSITY THEATRE
present

THE MERRY WIDOW

Composed by
FRANZ LEHAR

Libretto by
VICTOR LÉON and LEO STEIN

Artistic Director and Conductor
JONATHAN SHAMES

Stage Director
NICOLE KENLEY-MILLER

Choreographer
REBECCA HERRIN

Chorus Master
GIOVANNI CORRODUS

Assistant Conductor
KATIE NOELKER

Conducting Feb. 18 performance

Scenic Designer
ABIGAIL PIRTLE

Costume Designer
LLOYD CRACKNELL

Lighting Designer
KAIT STAPP

Vocal Coaches
TAYLOR HUTCHINSON
LORNE RICHSTONE

Associate Lighting Designer
EMILY MORRIS

Associate Stage Managers
MCKENNA BOWMAN
EMILY MATTHEWS

Stage Manager
JENNA NORTON

This production is suitable for all audiences.

8 P.M. FEBRUARY 15, 16, 17, 2024
3 P.M. FEBRUARY 18, 2024

REYNOLDS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
560 PARRINGTON OVAL, NORMAN, OK 73019

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Dear Friends and Patrons,

Thank you for your support of University Theatre and commitment to the arts on our campus and beyond! Performances at the University of Oklahoma have been presented for all of the 100-year history of the College of Fine Arts and in Holmberg Hall of the Reynolds Performing Arts Center since the hall first opened its doors in 1918.

The Merry Widow is an ideal contribution to our centennial celebration in this beautiful hall as it bubbles with all of the charm and joy of 1920’s Paris. From sparkling costumes and evocative scenery to Lehár’s sweeping melodies and a cast of beguiling characters, The Merry Widow provides a slice-of-life of Parisian society with its foibles, humor, humanity, and endless searches for love. This society is brought to delightful life by the faculty, staff, and students of the School of Music and Helmerich School of Drama, collaborating creatively in ways that entrance, entertain, and enhance our lives.

Undergraduates and graduate students polish their craft alongside faculty and professional staff, meeting challenges unseen by those in the audience who in turn make each production possible with their collaborative attendance and support. University Theatre is a wonderful place to be and, as the lights dim and the curtain rises on The Merry Widow we welcome you once again and invite you to celebrate the wonders of live theatre and the centennial of the College of Fine Arts with us!

Professor Mary Margaret Holt
Dean, Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts
Nichols’ Chair, Regents’ Professor, and
Presidential Professor
University of Oklahoma
University of Oklahoma Land Acknowledgement

Long before the University of Oklahoma was established, the land on which the University now resides was the traditional home of the “Hasinais” Caddo Nation and “Kirikiri:s” Wichita & Affiliated Tribes.

We acknowledge this territory once also served as a hunting ground, trade exchange point, and migration route for the Apache, Comanche, Kiowa, and Osage nations.

Today, 39 tribal nations dwell in the state of Oklahoma as a result of settler and colonial policies that were designed to assimilate Native people.

The University of Oklahoma recognizes the historical connection our university has with its indigenous community. We acknowledge, honor, and respect the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this land. We fully recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereign rights of all of Oklahoma’s 39 tribal nations. This acknowledgement is aligned with our university’s core value of creating a diverse and inclusive community. It is an institutional responsibility to recognize and acknowledge the people, culture, and history that make up our entire OU Community.

Masks are encouraged for all audience members.

Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices. The use of cameras or any recording devices is prohibited by law.

There is no tobacco use on The University of Oklahoma campus.
When "The Merry Widow" premiered in Vienna on December 30, 1905, it was an immediate hit, and that popularity has followed the piece through its performance history. Very few operas or operettas have garnered the commercial success of The Merry Widow. At the peak of its fame, sheet music and recordings of its most popular songs were widely purchased for in-home enjoyment; Merry Widow-themed products were on offer in stores; and five film adaptations were made, the most famous one by Ernst Lubitsch in 1934 starring Jeanette McDonald and Maurice Chevalier. All of this was on top of wide-spread performances across the globe. The Metropolitan Opera has programmed the opera more than twenty times in the last 100 years.

The libretto is based on a play by Henri Meilhac, who was himself a librettist for some of the most famous operas still performed today – Carmen, Manon, and several of Offenbach’s operettas. It surrounds the affairs of a small fictional country, Pontevedro, whose leaders are trying to protect the country’s financial solvency by making sure that the assets of the wealthy widow Hanna Glavari stay in the country.

The Merry Widow’s history has been one of endless adaptation. In addition to the five film versions, which offer a wide range of interpretations, there have been many English translations written that change the character’s names, the setting, the order of the musical numbers, etc. Our production combines the original German text of Viktor Léon and Leo Stein for all the musical numbers with spoken dialogue in English written by Donald Pippin, an American Broadway conductor and founder of Pocket Opera. The major change we have made is in the setting. The opera is most commonly set around the year it was premiered in 1905. We have chosen to move it to the late 1920s, so that we can take advantage of the glamorous society and nightlife that Paris had to offer at that time. Taking a nod from many productions that have moved the action of the third act to the famous nightclub Maxim’s (an actual restaurant and club that is still open in the 8th arrondissement in Paris), we have showcased the glitz and glamour of 1920s Paris nightlife, complete with a dance number by seven showgirls!

Without great music, costumes, scenery, and dance, this show cannot shine, so I am indebted to our artistic team who have collaborated to make this production so spectacular. Our music team have brought this beloved score to life. And our design team of Lloyd Cracknell, Abigail Pirtle, Kaitlyn Staff, and Goldie Snow, have captured the glamour and whimsy in the libretto so beautifully that it will be a feast for the eyes. I am also so grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with our choreographer Rebecca Herrin. As a director and teacher of young singer actors, I am passionate about them being able to move on stage. Professor Herrin shares this commitment to making dance accessible to performers who have not traditionally been called upon to dance. Her choreography has infused this performance with life and movement that will make it seem more akin to a Broadway musical than high opera.

And finally, I thank the students. Your commitment to this show and to learning so much choreography – something that I know you were not expecting when you were cast – has been an inspiration. In the face of many hours of cancelled rehearsal because of weather and illness, your investment and dedication has kept me going.

Not all theatre is meant to ask hard questions and challenge the audience’s thinking. Sometimes we need to just go to the opera and laugh and enjoy something beautiful in the company of other people to remind of us our collective humanity. We hope that happens for you and the person sitting next to you tonight. Sit back, unwind, and let yourself have a good time. We will be doing the same on the stage!
Act 1: The Pontevedran Embassy in Paris is hosting a party at which the millionairess Madame Hanna Glavari is expected. The host Baron Zeta, married to a young French wife Valencienne, is oblivious to the fact that his wife is having an affair with Count Camille Rosillon. As they shamelessly flirt, Camille writes a message on Valencienne’s fan – “I am in love with you,” but Valencienne insists that she wants to marry him off to someone else so that she can remain a respectable wife.

Zeta explains to the diplomats that Madame Glavari inherited millions when her husband died, all of which are held in the Pontevedran National Bank, and therefore the future of Pontevedro relies on whomever Madame Glavari marries. If she marries a non-Pontevedran and withdraws the funds, it could wipe out the economy of their entire country! Zeta proposes that they prevent her from marrying a foreigner by finding an attractive man from Pontevedro to set her up with, and he has one in mind - Count Danilo Danilovitch.

Madame Glavari arrives at the embassy and invites them all to a Pontevedran-themed party she is hosting the next evening at her home. Zeta apologizes that Danilo is not yet there to meet her. Hanna is surprised to hear his name, and Zeta is surprised that they already know each other. Valencienne explains to Camille that Hanna is the woman she plans for Camille to marry. He agrees reluctantly. Count Danilovitch finally arrives and is surprised to find Hanna there. They reminisce about their tangled past when they were in love and Danilo’s family didn’t approve of a marriage. Danilo declares that it is all in the past and he could never love Hanna again.

Kromov has found Valencienne’s fan, and thinking it is his wife Olga’s, is certain that she is cheating on him. Zeta assures Kromov that the fan belongs to his wife, Valencienne, getting her to play along. She claims that Zeta wrote on the fan, and Kromov goes to find Olga to apologize. Zeta explains the mission to Danilo – that he must marry Hanna Glavari. Danilo refuses to marry Hanna himself, but promises to find another Pontevedran for her to marry. Valencienne tries to pawn Camille off on Hanna, but Hanna chooses Danilo. Danilo tries to auction off his dance with Hanna to the other men. When no one buys the dance, Danilo decides he will take it after all, and they dance off together.

Act 2: Hanna begins her Pontevedran folk party by telling the tale of the magical wood fairy known as Vilja who bewitched a hunter. Zeta instructs Danilo that he needs to try to keep Hanna away from Camille and suggests that they find a secret in his past to bring to light...perhaps an affair. He proposes that his wife Valencienne would be a good candidate for getting the secret out of Camille.

Hanna finds Danilo alone and confronts him about why he has come to her party. Danilo won’t admit that he is jealous for her. Hanna reminisces about how much nicer things were back in the old days in Pontevedro.

Camille agrees to marry Hanna, but asks Valencienne for a souvenir of their relationship. She gives him her fan, on which she writes “I am a proud, impeccable wife.” Camille convinces her to have one last tryst in the pavilion. Njegus sees them sneaking into the pavilion together and attempts to keep Zeta from finding out, but is unsuccessful. As Zeta demands the door be opened, Njegus sneaks Hanna in the back of the pavilion to switch places with Valencienne. When the door is opened, Hanna and Camille emerge and announce that they are engaged. Danilo makes a scene and says that he is going back to his old life at Maxim’s. Hanna realizes that he really does love her.

Act 3: Zeta blames Danilo for the impending bankruptcy of Pontevedro. Danilo claims that a sense of duty to his country will not let him give up on Hanna. Left alone with Hanna, Danilo tells her that she should not marry Camille. Hanna explains that the pavilion incident was all a setup to protect Valencienne’s reputation. Danilo is overjoyed to find out that Hanna is not in love with Camille. As they dance, he finally opens up and they confess their love for each other.

Danilo reveals to Zeta that Hanna will not be marrying Camille, that her role in the pavilion was to help out a married woman whose reputation was on the line. A drunk Njegus enters with Valencienne’s fan. Valencienne claims the fan as hers. Zeta finally thinks that his wife has betrayed him until he reads the message on the fan, and they reconcile. Hanna reveals that her late husband’s will specifies that all her money will be passed to whomever she marries. Danilo confirms his love for her even with millions.
THE MERRY WIDOW

by Franz Lehár
Libretto by Victor Léon & Leo Stein

TIME     Set in the 1920’s

HANNA GLAWARI    Julia Pace (Nov. 15 & 17)
                 Amanda Koi (Nov. 16 & 18)
COUNT DANILO DANILOVITSCH  Matt Corcoran (Nov. 15 & 17)
                         Matt McKinnon (Nov. 16 & 18)
BARON MIRKO ZETA    Lane Elliott
VALENCIENNE       Elena McKenna (Nov. 15 & 17)
                 Rachel Gilliam (nov. 16 & 18)
CAMILLE, COUNT DE ROSILLON  Marcos Ochoa (Nov. 15 & 17)
                      Lorenzo Butler (Nov. 16 & 18)
NJEGUS             Thomas Chavira
DROMOW             Ryan Smith
BOGDANOVITCH      Joseph Matthew
Sylviane           Emma Hatfield
ST. BRIOCHE        Corbin Hall
CASCADA            Xander McRae
OLGA               Kate Snowden
PRITSCHITSCH      Mitch Waggoner
PRASKOWIA          Lily Campbell
GRISETTES:
    Do-Do           Megan Austin
    Frou-Frou       Lily Gnam
    Clo-Clo         Kaitlyn Johnson
    Margot          Aubrey McNeil
    Jou-Jou         Rebekeh Peters
    Lo-Lo           Carlie Pool
THE MERRY WIDOW
CHORUS / DANCERS

Giovanni Corrodus, chorus master
Rebecca Herrin, choreographer
Shara Sun and Zhengying Zhong, rehearsal pianists

SOPRANOS
Megan Austin
Katelyn Cruse
Emma Hatfield
Carlie Pool
Kaitlyn Johnson
Aubrey McNeil
Rebekah Peters

ALTOS
Lily Campbell
Erica Carranza
Allison Donnellon
Addison Gaillardet
Lilly Gnam
Laila Menden
Kate Snowden

TENORS
Samuel Cashdollar
Corbin Hall
Ryan Smith
Mitch Waggoner

BASSES
Lane Elliott
Joseph Matthew
Xander McRae
Nathaniel Stambaugh

This performance will have two 15-minute intermissions.
THE MERRY WIDOW ORCHESTRA

Jonathan Shames, conductor
Katie Noelker, assistant conductor
Shara Sun and Zhengying Zhong, rehearsal pianists

VIOLIN I
Juan Moreno Suarez, concertmaster
Leonard Chow
Paloma Torres
Amy Chang
Devin Sunday
Henry Ingels

VIOLIN II
Evalynn Reynolds, principal
Sage Gibson
Charis Steward

VIOLA
Jianghai Hu, principal
Vidal Verástegui
Zhe Cao
Evelyn Combs
Christian Whitfield
Anysa Hardin
Jacob Symalla
Hans Edlund

CELLO
Nicholas Bedway, principal
Karla Romani
Rece Nottingham
Erica Jernigan
Mason Leidner

BASS
Katie Fairbanks, principal
Gesiye Okoya

HARP
Caroline Robinson
Ciara Mariano

FLUTE
Adri Manzano, principal
Jackson Gordon

OBOE
Adelin Yoon, principal
Kinsten Rought

CLARINET
Emma Green, principal
Matt Tyler

BASSOON
Jake Jauregui Garcia, principal
Caleb Brogren

HORN
Skye Curtis, principal
Garrett Humann
Lauryn Marshall
Zoe McDowell

TRUMPET
Ben Eagan, principal
Gavin Palmer Ruiz

TROMBONE
Hope Bellows, principal
Isaac Haas
Alec Lawson, bass

TIMPANI/PERCUSION
Ian Heatherington, principal
Dillon Carpenter
Caleb Roybal

ORCHESTRA STAFF
Lily Blanchard, graduate assistant
Amy Chang, graduate assistant
Katie Noelker, graduate assistant
Adelin Yoon, undergraduate assistant
A special thank you to our current Dean’s Circle members!

- Membership as of Jan. 3, 2024 -

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100% of the funds raised through the OU Dean’s Circle membership go toward providing students in the College of Fine Arts opportunities off-campus that promote artistic and intellectual development.

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Faculty Advisor to Stage Management Christopher Sadler
Design and Production Area Coordinator Reneé Brode
Production Carpenter E. Pope
Scenic Charge Artist Sophie Block
Scenic Undergraduate Assistants Elizabeth Elliott, Cadence Gates, Diego Gonzales
Kay Bailey Hall, Gillian Kelley, Abby Knauber
Gage Martinez, Hollis Narkiewicz
Jenna Norton, Cara Oates, Abigail Pirtle,
Erasmio Salinas, Goldie Snow, Ethan Walker
Properties Director Margot Glaser
Properties Lead Goldie Snow
Run Crew Head Ryan Wallace-Woods
Run Crew Buck Blume, Lauren Foster
Iker Garcia, Conner Lin
Fly Rail Operator Hunter Sheehan
Electric Supervisor Eric Stehl
Lighting Undergraduate Assistants Micah Dooley, Lauren Foster, Madison Heckelsberg
Noah Jittaway, Madeline Lewis, Connor Lin
Lucas Knapp, Emily Morris, Ruby Ravsten
Kellen Sapp, Sophia Smith, Kait Stapp, Trey Wilson
Production Electricians Micah Dooley
Light Board Programmer Lucas Knapp
Light Board Operator Samantha Verbsky
Follow Spot Operators Carson Burton, Caylor Peterson
Audio Supervisor Alan Hiserodt
Audio Undergraduate Assistant Kait Stapp
Costume Studio Supervisor Christina Draper
Lead Stitcher Amy Kercher
Stitcher Stephanie Cirar
Costume Undergraduate Assistants Jodi Cone, Emily Heskett, Jylian Humber,
Paige Kasulis, Natalie Lane, Joy Omeish
Emily Post, Landre Sanders, Hunter Sheehan,
Brooke Strachan, Samantha Verbsky
Fight & Intimacy Captain E. Farney
Wardrobe Supervisor Stephanie Cirar
Wardrobe Crew Head Cheyenne Lok Suet Yeng
Wardrobe Crew Anthony Glosson, Luke Hartman
Melanie Jacobs, Katy Kendall, Blake Vest
Supertitle Operator Lily Blanchard
Box Office Terrye Hudson, Sherri Morgan
House Manager Donna Huston
Assistant House Managers Ellie Bush, Kristen Dickey, Kerynn Eckenrode
Madsy Hanks, Ella Partanen, Ella Platt
Production Undergraduate Assistant McKenna Bowman
MEET THE CAST
OF THE MERRY WIDOW

LORENZO BUTLER
LILY CAMPBELL
THOMAS CHAVIRA

MATT CORCORAN
LANE ELLIOTT
RACHEL GILLIAM

CORBIN HALL
EMMA HATFIELD
AMANDA KOSI
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<tr>
<td>ELENA McKENNA</td>
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<td>XANDER McRAE</td>
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<td>JOSEPH MATTHEW</td>
<td>JULIA PACE</td>
<td>RYAN SMITH</td>
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<td>KATE SNOWEN</td>
<td>MITCH WAGGONER</td>
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WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

LORENZO BUTLER (Camille, Count De Rosillon) is a third-year DMA in Voice candidate from Lawton, OK. Credits: University Theatre: Sam Polk, Susannah; Arthur Dimmesdale, The Scarlet Letter; William Center for the Performing Arts: Piquillo, LaPerichole; Opera on Tap OKC: Anthony Benson, No Justice, No Peace; Lawton Philharmonic Orchestra: Curly, Oklahoma!; Ozzie, On the Town; Mark A. Chapman Theatre: Elder Hayes, Susannah.

LILY CAMPBELL (Praskowia) is a vocal music education and performance junior from Norman, OK. Credits: OU University Theatre: Chorus, Orfeo ed Euridice; Chorus, Susannah. Sooner Theatre: Ensemble, Mamma Mia!

THOMAS CHAVIRA (Njegus) is an actor/educator/producer from Ft. Worth, TX. He holds a BFA from Abilene Christian University, and MFA in Performance Pedagogy from Loyola Marymount University. He has performed in theatres across Southern California and his film/tv credits include SHAMELESS and the feature film BENEATH US. As a producer he has nominations and awards from the LA Stage Alliance with Ovation awards for best production of an intimate theatre. Other credits include Dancing at Lughnasa and The Man Who Came to Dinner among others, As an educator, Chavira is interested in the expanding work of French Theatre practitioner Jacques Lacoq and highlighting the work of Hispanic and Latino authors. He is a member of SAG-AFTRA, Actors Equity, and the National Alliance of Acting Teachers.

MATTHEW CORCORAN (Danilo) is a DMA in Voice candidate from Ipswich, MA. Credits: University Theatre: Sam, Susannah; Santa Fe Opera: Cavaradossi(c), Tosca; UNT Opera: The Male Chorus, The Rape of Lucretia; Dallas Symphony Orchestra: Jew #3, Salome; SMU Opera: The Stage Manager, Our Town; NEMPAC: Don Ottavio, Don Giovanni; Opera 51: Eisenstein, Die Fledermaus; Soloist, Beethoven 9, Verdi Requiem, Mozart Requiem, Handel's Messiah; Mozart Grand Mass in C Minor, Various Back Cantatas.

LANE ELLIOTT (Baron Zeta) is a vocal performance senior from Moore, OK. Credits: OU University Theatre: First Man/Chorus, Susannah; Chorus, Orfeo ed Euridice; Saratro, The Magic Flute (abridged). Painted Sky Opera: Chorus, La Bohème; Chorus, Don Giovanni; Chorus, Carmen; Chorus, Pagliacci. Norman Philharmonic: Pontius Pilate, St. John's Passion. Cimarron Opera: Bunthorne, An Exciting Trip to the Museum!

RACHEL GILLIAM (Valencienne) is a vocal performance senior from Broken Arrow, OK. Credits: OU University Theatre: Queen of the Night, The Magic Flute (abridged); Pamina, The Magic Flute (abridged); Chorus, Susannah; Euridice, Orfeo ed Euridice.

CORBIN HALL (St. Brioche) is a vocal performance senior from Norman, OK. Credits: OU University Theatre: Chorus, Orfeo de Euridice; Chorus, Susannah. Oklahoma Parks and Recreation: All Good Gifts, Godspell.

EMMA HATFIELD (Chorus) is a vocal education sophomore from Bartlesville, OK. Credits: University Theatre: Chorus, Orfeo ed Euridice.

AMANDA KOSI (Hanna) is a MFA in Voice Performance student from Qonce, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Credits: OU University Theatre: Susannah, Susannah; Hester Prynne, The Scarlet Letter; Winsepar Opera House: Laurette, Doctor Miracle; Southern Methodist University: Fiordiligi, Così Fan Tutte; Nelson Mandela University: Nellie Forbush, South Pacific.

ELENA McKENNA (Valencienne) is a vocal performance senior from Arlington, TX. Credits: OU University Theatre: Euridice, Orfeo ed Euridice; Mrs. Hayes, Susannah. Mediterranean Opera Studio and Festival: Lucia, Lucia di Lammermoor; First & Second Lady, The Little Flute (Die Zauberflöte abridged).

MATTWIE McKINNON (Count Danilo Danilovitsch) is a second-year DMA vocal performance candidate, with an opera concentration, from Belton, TX. Credits: OU University Theatre: Orfeo, Orfeo ed Euridice; Elder McLean, Susannah; Roger Chillingworth, The Scarlet Letter; Schindarian, Coffee Cantata; Zurga, The Pearl Fishers (Reimagined). Opera in the Ozarks: Top, The Tender Land; Belcore, L'elisir d'amore. Red River Lyric Opera: Argante, Rinaldo.
WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

XANDER McRAE (Cascada) is a Vocal Performance and Music Education senior from McKinney, OK. Credits: OU University Theatre: Elder Ott, Susannah; Sailor, The Scarlet Letter; Seagle Music Festival: Count Capulet, Romeo et Juliette.

JOSEPH MATTHEW (Bogdanovitch) is a Vocal Performance and Pre-Med sophomore from Coppell, TX. This is his University Theatre debut.

JULIA PACE (Hanna) is a second-year Master’s of Music in Opera Performance student from Azle, TX. Credits: OU University Theatre: Mrs. Gleaton, Susannah; Music On Site, Inc.: La Conversa I, La Conversa II, Suor Angelica; Opera Seme: Suor Pazie, Mese Mariano; Chorus, Die Zauberflöte.


RYAN SMITH (Kromow) is a Vocal Performance junior from Keller, TX. Credits: OU University Theatre: Chorus, Susannah; Monastatos, Magic Flute; Cimarron Opera: Sir Roderik, Ruddigore; Painted Sky Opera: Chorus, La Boheme; FIO Italia: Rinuccio, Gianni Schicchi; Le Chevalier, Dialogues of the Carmelites.

KATE SNOWDEN (Olga) is a first-year Masters of Music vocal performance student, with opera concentration, from Bartlesville, OK. Credits: OU University Theatre: Orfeo, Orfeo ed Euridice; Mrs. Ott, Susannah; Lady in Waiting, The Magic Flute (abridged); Goodwife, The Scarlet Letter.


WHO'S WHO BEHIND THE SCENES

KASEY ALLEE-FOREMAN has served as Associate Producer/Production Manager for over 90 productions in the Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma. She is currently the VP for Conferences for USITT. A short listing of her professional theatre credits include: SphinxCON, a conference promoting Diversity in the Arts; Canterbury Choral: Bernstein’s Mass; Houston Grand Opera: Renée Fleming’s premiere La Traviata (world premiere); Stages Repertory Theatre (Houston); Houston Shakespeare Festival; Shakespeare Festival at Tulane (New Orleans); Theatre West (Los Angeles). Professional film credits include: Mystery, Alaska, Lost and Found; Austin Powers: The Spy who Shagged Me. She is proud to have served on the USITT Board of Directors as the VP for Conferences, the VP for Education and Training and as a Director. She has served USITT on the Conference Committee chair and member, IDEAS Committee chair and member, is the co-founder of the Gateway Program, and has been the Co-chair of the Women in Theatre Network. Kasey received her MFA in Costume Design and Technology and Lighting Design and Technology from the University of New Orleans and he BA in Theatre Arts from Furman University.

McKENNA BOWMAN (Associate Stage Manager) is a stage management sophomore from Prosper, TX . Credits: OU University Theatre: Associate Stage Manage, Susannah.

GIOVANNI CORRODUS (Chorus Master) began tertiary music training in Jamaica at Northern Caribbean University under Dr. Kaestner Robertson, pursuing both the BA degree in Music and the BSc degree in Computer Science. Upon completing undergraduate study, Giovanni continued his academic work in the United States, earning the MM degree in Choral Conducting from Andrews University. He is currently pursuing the DMA in Choral Conducting at OU where he holds a choral graduate assistantship. Giovanni has held conducting engagements throughout Jamaica and the United States.
REBECCA HERRIN (Choreographer) Ms. Herrin danced professionally throughout the United States before joining the OU School of Dance ballet faculty in 2005. She enjoys working with OU Opera Theatre; previous projects include Don Giovanni, Die Fledermaus, Lakmé, Eugene Onegin, and Susannah. She holds an MFA from Montclair State University and an MBA from the University of Oklahoma.

EMILY HESKITT (Costume Designer) is a costume design junior from Lake Charles, LA. This is her OU University Theatre debut.

MARY MARGARET HOLT (Producer) began her early ballet training in Austin, Texas at Austin Civic Ballet, receiving a Ford Foundation scholarship for study with the San Francisco Ballet at the age of 15. Subsequently, she received a Ford Foundation scholarship for study at the School of American Ballet, also appearing with the New York City Ballet. Holt accepted a soloist contract the New York City Ballet upon completing her BFA in Ballet Performance. While a member of Houston Ballet, by choreographers including Stevenson, Van Manen, Van Danzig, Petipa, Balanchine, Taras, Dolin, Boris, Clouser, Franklin, Ivanov, de Mille, and O’Donnell. She also performed principal roles in Terekhov’s The Firebird, The Snow Maiden, and Don Quixote. She has performed as a guest artist, teacher, and choreographer with ballet and opera companies across the United States.

Holt joined the dance faculty of the University of Oklahoma School of Dance as an assistant professor, following Miguel Terekhov as chair in 1991, and an appointment as director in 1998. As director of Oklahoma Festival Ballet, Holt has choreographed over forty ballets and operas and led Oklahoma Festival Ballet on tours to France (six), the Internationale Haydntage in Austria (two), Mexico (three), Taiwan, China, and Ecuador. Holt choreography includes the music of Franck, Haydn, The Beatles, Porter, Weill, Mozart, Ginastera, Ikar, Holley, Satie, Bartok, Orff, and Debussy and her ballets have been seen across the U.S. as well as in South America, the United Kingdom, and Europe. Under Holt’s leadership, Oklahoma Festival Ballet performed works from the national repertoire by Joffrey and Balanchine as well as de Mille’s, Rodeo. Her students have performed with Miami City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ballet Arizona, Ballet Austin, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Orlando Ballet, Oklahoma City Ballet, and Tulsa Ballet, and as finalists and semifinalists in the International Ballet Competition. At the University of Oklahoma, Holt taught every course in the ballet curriculum and her continuing studies in ballet pedagogy include studying Bournonville Technique with Tage Wendt; and Vaganove Technique at the Bolshoi Academy at Vail; and in St. Petersburg and Minsk, Russia.

Holt was an honoree at the second national RDA Festival in Pittsburgh in 2007, and she received the CORPS de Ballet International Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020. She has served on the Dance Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts and been a panelist on Women in the Academy at Oxford. She is the recipient of the Governor’s Arts Award, the Presidential Professorship, and the Regents’ Professorship at OU where she also holds the John and Mary Nichols’ Chair in Dance.

TAYLOR HUTCHINSON (Vocal Coach) joined the faculty of the University of Oklahoma School of Music in 2023. She enjoys a versatile career, frequently performing alongside both singers and instrumentalists in repertoire ranging from Baroque opera to contemporary chamber music and musical theatre. Her international career has included performances in the Czech Republic, France, and Germany.

In great demand as a vocal coach and partner of singers, in Summer 2023 Dr. Hutchinson joined the music staff of Painted Sky Opera, and has previously been on faculty with the Prague Summer Nights Young Artists Music Festival, and she was the music director of Opera at Truman. She has also performed and coached with the Bay View Music Festival, Musiktheater Bavaria, the Druid City Opera Workshop, and the Franco-American Vocal Academy. She is an alumni of the NATS intern program and a former SongFest fellow.

Dr. Hutchinson’s recent projects include the world premiere of Honk!, a new work for tuba and piano, Don Giovanni and La Bohème with Painted Sky Opera, art song performances with longtime collaborator baritone Jarrett Porter, musicals including Sweeney Todd and Bright Star, and multiple productions of Le Nozze di Figaro.
EMILY MATTHEWS (Associate Stage Manager) is a stage management freshman from Flower Mound, TX. This is her OU University Theatre debut.

DR. NICOLE KENLEY-MILLER (Stage Director) is known for her colorful and embodied productions of opera and music theatre, both on stage and film. Her work has premiered off-Broadway in New York and has been featured on The Kennedy Center’s Arts Across America Series.

She previously served as production manager and stage director for University of Houston's Moores Opera Center, where she regularly directed mainstage student productions. She also created two opera films for Moores during the pandemic, which garnered multiple awards from national and international film competitions and took First Place in both The American Prize and National Opera Association Opera Production Competitions. A highlight of her time at UH was the direction of the first musical produced by the College of the Arts at University of Houston, a collaborative production of Little Shop of Horrors between the Schools of Music and Theatre and Dance.

Most recently, she served as the first new stage director in the forty-year history of Houston’s Gilbert and Sullivan Society, directing The Pirates of Penzance in the summer of 2023. She has also directed professionally for Houston’s Opera in the Heights in a sold-out production of Amahl and the Night Visitors and will be returning there to direct La Bohème this Spring. As Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Sugar Land Opera, she helped establish the former Imperial Theatre, the first professional theatre space in Fort Bend County.

Her latest creative venture is the founding of Intersection Arts, an organization which explores the convergence of different art forms to speak to social and cultural issues of our day. Its first production was The Women Have Something to Say, a newly-composed theatrical music work that premiered in 2021 in Houston which celebrates women’s voices. The work has been featured by The Kennedy Center and performed off-Broadway in New York. It recently won Third Place in The American Prize for Vocal Chamber Music Composition.

Nicole lives in Midwest City with her partner and poet, Andy Miller.

EMILY MORRIS (Associate Lighting Designer) is a Theatrical Design freshman, with emphasis in lighting. Credits: OU University Theatre: Associate Lighting Designer, Heathers; Lighting Designer, Young Choreographers Showcase.

S. KATIE NOELKER is a second year DMA Orchestral Conducting student studying with Dr. Jonathan Shames. Originally from Danville, Kentucky, Noelker pursued her Bachelors Degree in Piano Performance and a Masters in Orchestral Conducting from Eastern Kentucky University. After graduating, Noelker served as Visiting Professor and Orchestra Conductor at Eastern Kentucky University where she led through the 2020-2021 season. Noelker has served as Assistant Director/Director and Conductor of the Heritage Area String Program Youth Orchestra from 2018-2021 and Director of Orchestras at Foster Music Camp for the 2021 season.

Ms. Noelker is currently the music director and conductor of the University of Oklahoma Civic Orchestra. This is her fourth show with the OU Opera Theatre serving as Assistant Conductor.

JENNA NORTON (Stage Manager) is a stage management junior from Coeur d'Alene, ID. Credits: OU University Theatre: Associate Stage Manager, Orfeo ed Euridice; Associate Stage Manager, The Wild Party. Coeur d’Alene Summer Theatre: Stage Manager, Footloose. Cimarron Opera: Stage Manager, Ruddigore.

ABIGAIL PIRTLE (Scenic Designer) is a Scenic Design sophomore from Norman, OK. Credits: Props Lead, Susannah; Props Lead, Everybody; Co Arts: Scenic Assistant, Good For Her.

LORNE RICHSTONE (Vocal Coach) joined the School of Music at the University of Oklahoma in 2006 as Professor of Opera and Vocal Coaching. From 1982 to 2006, Richstone was on the vocal coaching staff of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Germany, where he played under a host of prominent conductors and appeared in performances with many of the world’s leading singers. In addition, he taught vocal repertoire at the Hochschule für Musik “Hanns Eisler” and the China, the United States, and Canada. His recordings include Carmina Burana (Orff) and Salome (Strauss) for Deutsche Gramophon, La Vita Nuova (E. Wolf-Ferrari) for Koch-Schwann, and Jakob Lenz (W. Rihm) for Harmonia Mundi.
WHO’S WHO BEHIND THE SCENES

JONATHAN SHAMES (Artistic Director/Conductor) began his conducting career at the age of 19 with the Opera Company of Boston, and has since conducted throughout the United States, holding music directorships of orchestras and festivals in Washington and Wyoming, as well as serving on the faculties of the University of Michigan, Oberlin Conservatory and Cornell University. At the University of Oklahoma, he has led the orchestra and opera programs since 2005, conducting over 20 different opera productions, and with the orchestra, introducing Oklahomans to works by such recent composers as Crumb, Andriessen, Nono, Dutilleux, Zimmermann, Durand, Schoenberg and Webern. Dr. Shames also maintains a career as a concert pianist, launched when he won a Finalist-Diploma in the 1982 Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow. His recent activities have included a return appearance with the Clermont-Ferrand Conservatoire Orchestra in France, piano master classes at the Festival International de Música Académica at the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León in Monterrey, Mexico.

KAIT STAPP (Lighting Designer) is a lighting and sound design senior from Bartlesville, OK. Credits: OU University Theatre: Lighting Designer, Heathers: The Musical; Lighting Designer, Deux Amours; Train of Thought (OFB ’23); Lighting Designer, At Once Returned; Divine, Divergence; Funny How Time Slips Away (YCS ’23); Lighting Designer, Radium Girls; Lighting Designer, This Old House; The Way You Hide (CDO ’22); Lighting Designer, The Sleeping Beauty, Act II (OFB ’22)

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