LA BOHÈME
A NEW PRODUCTION BY Detroit Opera

LA BOHÈME
SAT / APR 2, 2022 / 6:30 PM
WED / APR 6, 2022 / 7:30 PM
SUN / APR 10, 2022 / 2:30 PM
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PRESENTED BY
WITH SUPPORT FROM

A NEW PRODUCTION BY
Detroit Opera

The Life and Times of Malcolm X
May 14 / May 19 / May 22

MUSIC BY
ANTHONY DAVIS

LIBRETTO BY
THULANI DAVIS

DIRECTED BY
ROBERT O’HARA

CONDUCTED BY
KAZEM ABDULLAH

PRESENTED BY
WITH SUPPORT FROM
We are thrilled to welcome guests back to the Detroit Opera House. The safety of our guests, artists, and staff is our greatest priority. In response to the current COVID-19 infection numbers, we have updated our safety protocols as outlined below. As always, we will follow guidelines and recommendations as set forth by the CDC and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. We will continue to monitor and adjust these policies as appropriate.

Masks must be worn inside the Detroit Opera House, properly over the nose and mouth. All patrons must wear a mask at all times—unless actively eating or drinking, regardless of vaccination status.

Enhanced cleaning procedures are in place. You may notice our staff disinfecting areas regularly around the building. Air filtration systems in the Detroit Opera House have been upgraded with MERV 15 filters. Hand sanitizing stations are located in highly visible and accessible locations throughout the building. Training protocols and routine evaluations are ongoing. Cashless payment options, including credit and debit cards and mobile pay applications, are available onsite.

FOR YOUR SAFETY AND COMFORT

Welcome to the Detroit Opera House!

COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES

Face coverings must be worn at all times, unless actively eating or drinking.

Thank you for helping us keep each other safe.
Welcome back to the Detroit Opera House after a two-year intermission for opera performances in our home. When the pandemic began, Michigan Opera Theatre was preparing for its 50th anniversary as an opera company founded in Detroit by David DiChiera. The unexpected cessation of what has often been referred to as normal routine became anything but normal. The conditions required an unexpected disruption from in-person presentation of opera, dance, and education programs within the David DiChiera Center for the Performing Arts for a two-year period. However, sustained by the generosity of thousands of supporters and a committed Board of Directors — along with a dedicated staff — our organization persevered. During the pause, Yuval Sharon, an internationally celebrated director, was appointed as our new Artistic Director for opera, followed by the appointment of Christine Goerke, one of the most significant voices on opera stages around the world, as our Associate Artistic Director.

Over the past two years, audiences have joined us on a journey filled with exploration and new adventures as we have presented performances in site-specific settings throughout the region, launched a visioning exercise, and appointed new team members. One of the outcomes along this journey has been a change in our name to Detroit Opera. Yes, our organization now identifies itself completely with the city and community of its location!

The challenging conditions that Detroit Opera has encountered over the past two years were faced with tremendous imagination, creativity, and determination
by countless stakeholders. Through it all, our company has been resolute in affirming our role and commitment as a community asset. The Detroit Opera House is emerging as a modified and updated venue with enhancements designed to expand accessibility for all patrons. We are near completion of the first phase of our work and welcome those who wish to assist us in this physical plant enhancement that is so necessary for our patrons going forward.

These presentations of *La bohème* are especially meaningful, as they mark the inauguration of a new production of the opera as imagined by Yuval Sharon — also his first production in our Detroit Opera House! We are honored to be joined by celebrated set designer John Conklin and a stellar cast and look forward to these performances. We are also grateful to our partners at Boston Lyric Opera and Spoleto Festival USA for joining us as co-producers on this new production.

As we all continue to navigate our way through these unprecedented times, we extend special thanks to our Season Sponsor, The William Davidson Foundation; our *La bohème* sponsors Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, Lafayette American, and Gary L. Wasserman and Charles H. Kashner; and our many donors. Likewise, we thank all of you for joining us and invite you to return for performances of our closing opera for the season: Anthony Davis and Thulani Davis’s *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, a new production that will originate in Detroit and then proceed with performances by our partnering opera companies in Omaha, Seattle, and Chicago, as well as The Metropolitan Opera.

Ethan Davidson
Chair, Board of Directors, Detroit Opera

Wayne S. Brown
President & CEO, Detroit Opera
A MESSAGE FROM
Yuval Sharon

“How do you begin telling the story of a great love when you know it ended in disaster?”

Sandro Veronesi’s line from his book Il colibrì (The Hummingbird) accompanies a story that hops back and forth in time, narrating a tender romance that ended in heartbreak. Veronesi’s goal is to “demolish the tyranny of chronology” and to place more emphasis on how things happen, rather than what happens. Along the way, the reader is confronted with the unruly and indirect nature of memory, and she may come to understand what the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard summarized so perfectly: “Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.”

Veronesi’s recent novel is a fitting point of departure for this production of La bohème, which begins at the end and works in reverse order, back to the first moment Mimi and Rodolfo met. The kind of narrative experiment undertaken in Veronesi’s novel seems hard to imagine in an art form like opera, where the “tyranny of chronology” seems fixed in the rigid architecture of the music. Most operas would not sustain this kind of approach, with arrow-like stories that move in only one direction.

But Bohème tells its story in a highly unconventional manner: Puccini described the work as a piece in quattro quadri, or “four pictures.” Henri Murger’s original work, Scenes from the Bohemian Life, was published in serial form from 1845 to 1848, resulting in an episodic, impressionistic snapshot of a revolutionary underbelly of society. Atmosphere and color are more important than the narrative arcs we find in great novels of the time, and the resulting work resembles the nascent art of photography more than classic literature. If Murger’s writing was photographic, Puccini’s opera—written as the “moving image” was born—is powerfully cinematic. Simultaneous action, interspersed scenes, overlapping events—all of this creates a new and very modern sense of time that is barely contained by the musical meter. There are few, if any, moments in opera that capture falling in love—with its anarchic rush of impressions and the psychedelic dissolution of time—as
effectively as Act II. *Bohème* may be the most popular opera in the repertoire, but its radical qualities are paradoxically undervalued. (Is the opera too popular to claim it for the avant-garde?)

One of the remarkable discoveries we’ve made in preparing this production is how lightning-fast the entire opera plays out. Performed without intermission and with one discrete cut in the first act, *Bohème* clocks in at just over 90 minutes. This comes as a shock to most opera patrons, who think of *Bohème* as nearly three-hour affairs. Cumbersome scene changes — taking the notion of “four pictures” literally — usually necessitate at least one, if not two, intermissions. The pressure to “over-do” *Bohème* also creates uneasy contradictions: the starving artists describe their garret as “squalid”, “drafty,” and “cramped,” but most productions have them living in what looks like the most enviable penthouse in Paris. I wanted to create a production that emphasized the swiftness of the music and the brevity of these lives; all the myriad details that make up a typical *Bohème* — the stereotypes and clichés, as well as the pictorial expectations — have been sifted away in search of the work’s true gold. We are after the essence of this work, which I think of as the perfectly preserved energy of being young, full of hope, and in love with life.

There are big questions invoked when we perform a classic like *La bohème* in a non-traditional way, such as: how and why do we perform masterpieces in the here and now? What is to be gained by disrupting conventional listening? Is it possible to treat operatic masterpieces with the same interpretive flexibility that, say, Shakespeare’s plays demand? While those provocations offer a background to the work we’ve done with this opera, they are also, fittingly, not our endgame, but our point of departure. Likewise, I hope it offers you a point of departure to listen and experience the opera as if it is a world premiere.

More importantly, I hope it invites you to explore a personal meditation on life and love. To return to Veronesi: how do you tell your great love story? Do you start from the beginning, or do you chart a meandering path? Disaster, death, and loss will inevitably befall even the happiest lives and loves—but is that really the end of the story?

Welcome to Detroit Opera.

Yuval Sharon

*The Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director*
Nestled in the center of Detroit’s downtown entertainment district are The Statler French-American Bistro and the Statler MKT, both within walking proximity to the Detroit Opera House. The Statler features modern French cuisine, while our incredible market offers gourmet to go and pantry items. Make The Statler your next destination before or after your visit to the opera house or any of the city’s other downtown entertainment venues!
LA BOHÉME

IS GENEROUSLY PRESENTED BY

SEASON SPONSOR
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Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation
Lafayette American
Gary L. Wasserman and Charles H. Kashner
AN OPERA IN FOUR PICTURES
PERFORMED IN ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH SUPERTITLES
PERFORMANCE RUNS 100 MINUTES WITH NO INTERMISSION

Music ......................... Giacomo Puccini
Libretto ......................... Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa

WORLD PREMIERE
Teatro Regio, Turin, Italy, February 1, 1896

Director ......................... Yuval Sharon
Set Designer ...................... John Conklin
Costume Designer ............ Jessica Jahn
Lighting Designer ............ John Torres
Wig & Makeup Designer .... Joanne Middleton Weaver
Stage Manager ............... Kimberley Prescott
Chorus Master ................. Suzanne Mallare Acton

Detroit Opera Chorus and Orchestra
Children’s Chorus
**LA BOHÈME**

**Cast**

*Conductor* ......................... Roberto Kalb

*Mimi*, a flowergirl .................. Marlen Nahhas
*Rodolfo*, a poet ..................... Matthew White
*Marcello*, a painter ................ Edward Parks
*Musetta*, a singer .................. Brandie Inez Sutton
*Colline*, a philosopher ............ Cory McGee
*Schaunard*, a musician ............. Benjamin Taylor
*Alcindoro*, an admirer of Musetta .... Jonathan Lasch
*Parpignol*, a toy vendor ........... Cameron Johnson
Customhouse Officer ................ Benton DeGroot
*Sergeant* ............................. Matthew Konopacki
*Child* ................................. Isabella Edmonds-Hogan
*Prune Seller* ......................... Gregory Ashe

The Wanderer ........................... George Shirley

*Actors*
Jessica Annunziata
Biba Bell
X. Alexander Durden
Hank Felix
Peter Knox
Alexis Primus
LA BOHÉME
Production Credits

A Co-Production of Detroit Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, and Spoleto Festival USA
This co-production has been made possible in part by a grant from the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Cover Conductor
Nathalie Doucet

Répétiteur
Keun-A Lee

Associate Director
James Blaszko

Assistant Director
& Fight Choreographer
Christine Elliott

Assistant Lighting Designer
Heather DeFauw

Props Master
Moníka Essen

Assistant Stage Managers
Nan Luchini
Hailli Ridsdale

Supertitles Created By
Yuval Sharon
John Conklin

Supertitles Operator
Dee Dorsey

Scenery constructed at TTS Studios.
Costumes constructed at Detroit Opera Costume Shop.

Detroit Opera
DETROIT OPERA CHORUS

The Detroit Opera Chorus dedicates these performances of La bohème in memory of Tamara Lehew Whitty.

**Soprano**
Brandy Adams
Carol Ambrogio Wood
Heidi Bowen Zook
Alaina Brown
Claire Chardon Kahl
Megan McCarthy
Jessie Neilson
Jennifer Noel
Allison Wamser
Maitri White

**Alto**
Lily Czartorski
Yvonne Friday
Hillary LaBonte
Madison Montambault
Leslie Naeve
Katya Powder
Kristina Riegle
Diane Rae Schoff
Hannah Wikaryasz
Antona Yost

**Tenor**
Gregory Ashe
Fred Buchalter
Richard Jackson, Jr.
Cameron Johnson
Seth Johnson
Adrian Leskiw
David Magumba
Zane Pergram
Jason Thomas
Brett Thompson

**Bass**
Benton DeGroot
Zachary Coates
Joseph Edmonds
Kurt Frank
Paul Leland Hill
Matthew Konopacki
Paolo Pacheco
Jinho Park
Terrence Stewart

Choristers are represented by the American Guild of Musical Artists.

**Children’s Chorus**
Suzanne Mallare Acton DIRECTOR
Shanzay Ali
Paula Casillas-Lopez
Addison Danke
Oscar DeLuca
Isabella Edmonds-Hogan
Maria Espinosa Ventura
Lillian Fellows
Allan Grigsby
Caitlin Juip
Ella Kusina
Anika Lopes
Laila Morris
Riya Nambiar
Roxanne Norris
Violet Procurier
Madeline Quint
Anna Schultz*
Keara Schultz
Viraj Tathavadekar
Rosaleigh Wyman

* understudy for “Child”
DETROIT OPERA ORCHESTRA

Violin I
Eliot Heaton*
CONCERTMASTER
Laura Roelofs*
Henrik Karapetyan*
Bryan Johnston*
Emily Barkakati*
Anna Bittar-Weller*
Velda Kelly*
David Ormai

Violin II
Daniel Stachyra*
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Molly Hughes*
Andrew Wu*
Mallory Tabb
Beth Kirton*
Yuri Popowycz

Viola
John Madison*
PRINCIPAL
Scott Stefanko*
Jacqueline Hanson*
Julianne Zinn

Cello
Andrea Yun*
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Nancy Chaklos
David Huckaby
Irina Tikhonova

Bass
Derek Weller*
PRINCIPAL
Clark Suttle*

Flute
Dennis Carter
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Laura Larson*

Piccolo
Scott Graddy
Oboe
Sally
Heffelfinger-Pituch*
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Yuki Harding

English Horn
Kristin Reynolds

Clarinet
Brian Bowman*
PRINCIPAL
J. William King*

Bass Clarinet
Shannon Orme

Bassoon
Gregory Quick*
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Roger
Maki-Schramm*

Horn
Carrie
Banfield-Taplin*
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Susan Mutter
David Denniston
Tamara Kosinski

Trumpet
David Ammer*
PRINCIPAL
Gordon Simmons*
Derek Lockhart

Trombone
Brittany Lasch*
PRINCIPAL
Robyn Smith*

Bass Trombone
John Rutherford
Bryan Pokorney

Timpani
Terence Farmer
ACTING PRINCIPAL

Percussion
John Dorsey*
PRINCIPAL
David Taylor
Keith Claeys

Harp
Patricia Terry-Ross*
PRINCIPAL

Banda
Ross Turner
TRUMPET
Charles Saenz
TRUMPET
Dan Maslanka
SIDE DRUM

*Detroit Opera Core Orchestra

Members of the violin sections occasionally rotate.

Detroit Federation of Musicians, Local #5, of the American Federation of Musicians
DEATH / In their cramped, spare apartment, lovesickness blocks Rodolfo and Marcello from creating. Schaunard and Colline try making the best of their impoverishment by pretending their meager meal is a grand ball. Musetta bursts in with the gravely ill Mimi; Schaunard recognizes that she has little time left. Marcello and Musetta reconcile and search for a doctor and any last comfort they can offer Mimi; Colline offers to sell the beloved coat that Schaunard bought for him to pay for the doctor. Briefly alone, Mimi and Rodolfo recall the first time they met. The friends come back with medicine, money, and a muff for Mimi’s cold hands. They await the doctor’s arrival, but it’s too late: Mimi’s life slips through their fingers.

BARRIÈRE / Three months earlier. At a border crossing at dawn, Mimi desperately seeks out Marcello. He has been living with Musetta as boarders in a shabby tavern, where he paints and she offers singing lessons. Mimi confesses that Rodolfo has been erratic and cruel to her and wants to end their relationship. Rodolfo has slept at the tavern, and as he confides to Marcello, Mimi eavesdrops on the conversation. At first, Rodolfo lies about the reason for their break-up: he’s bored with her, and she’s a terrible flirt. But he lets down his guard and reveals the truth: he knows that Mimi is very sick and feels powerless to help her. With the secret of her sickness revealed, Mimi holds back her emotions and ends their relationship. But as the two of them recount all the many things they will miss — and with Marcello and Musetta’s latest turbulent break-up unfolding in the background — Rodolfo and Mimi decide to stay together only through the winter.

MOMUS / Two months earlier — Christmas Eve. The streets of Paris are ablaze with life and a carnivalesque anarchy. Amid shouts of street hawkers, Rodolfo buys Mimi a bonnet near the Café Momus before introducing her to his friends. Musetta enters ostentatiously on the arm of the wealthy Alcindoro. Trying to regain the painter’s attention, she sings a waltz about her irresistible beauty. Marcello successfully ignores her, but when Musetta pretends to suffer from a pinched foot, he falls into a passionate frenzy. As the couple reunites, a rousing march fills the streets.

LOVE / Earlier that night. Marcello and Rodolfo try to keep warm by burning pages from Rodolfo’s drama. Colline enters in time to catch the last of the dying flames. Schaunard, newly employed as a music tutor, surprises them all with a bounty of food, wine, cigars, and wood for the stove. He urges the friends to save the provisions — in case of a gloomy future — and eat a celebratory meal at Café Momus instead. Rodolfo stays behind to write, but he’s not inspired — until a knock at the door signals the arrival of Mimi, his new neighbor, whose candle has gone out on the drafty stairs. Out of breath, she faints to the floor, but a cool splash of water revives her. Rodolfo ignites her candle, but when the two search for Mimi’s dropped key, both candles are blown out. In the moonlight, the poet takes the girl’s cold hand and offers to warm it for her. He introduces himself as a poet who lives with hope in his heart. She tells him about her quiet life and the poems she reads in the flowers. Overwhelmed with love, they go out into the night, their cries of love echoing into eternity.
It is the first of Puccini’s most celebrated works, which also include Tosca (1900), Madama Butterfly (1904), and Turandot (1924), and along with these helped secure his position as the leading Italian opera composer of the era and as Giuseppe Verdi’s presumed successor. In staging canonic operas like La bohème, a major challenge facing opera directors today is how to make these operas fresh, engaging, and relevant. One approach is that of Regietheater or director’s theater, in which an opera’s setting is updated by adding, removing, or altering non-musical elements—for example, situating La bohème in 21st-century rather than 19th-century Paris and transforming Marcello and Mimi from a painter and seamstress to graffiti and tattoo artists. Reactions to such approaches are typically mixed: some laud them as visionary
ways to reframe familiar works for contemporary audiences, while others criticize them as “Eurotrash,” mere window dressings that privilege a director’s vision over the composer’s. However, in his new production for Detroit Opera, Yuval Sharon has taken a different approach, one that will force us to hear and experience this canonic opera anew while lovingly retaining the traditional setting of Puccini’s beloved work. Rather than changing the setting, this new production changes how we progress through the staging: La bohème’s familiar narrative is presented in reverse order, beginning with Act IV and moving through Acts III and II before concluding with Act I.

“Rather than changing the setting, this new production changes how we progress...”

By rearranging La bohème’s constituent parts, Sharon’s production offers the opportunity to reframe our experience of La bohème without any details being updated or altered (aside from the order of the acts). In a sense, this comparatively minimal directorial intervention is in line with the opera’s verismo—or “realist”—spirit. At the turn of the 20th century, Puccini was among a group of young Italian opera composers whose aesthetic outlook was shaped by this artistic movement. Influenced by French literary circles, verismo composers considered the real world worth representing, and in their operas they strove to provide an artistic interpretation of things that someone might actually experience. Puccini worked with librettists Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica—with whom he would also later collaborate on Tosca and Madama Butterfly—to create an opera that authentically represented the world it inhabited—including a relatively realistic portrayal of Mimi’s illness and the deleterious effects of the main characters’ poverty.

Beyond its verismo elements, La bohème lends itself particularly well to this reverse ordering for a variety of reasons. First, the source material on which the opera is based—Henri Murger’s 1851 Scènes de la vie de bohème—is less a traditional novel and more a collection of short stories romanticizing the bohemian life. This episodic construction carries over into Puccini’s opera, which has clear breaks between each
act—Act I is set in the Parisian garret on Christmas Eve; Act II, though taking place that same evening, creates a decisive break from the tender love duet at the end of the previous act by opening amidst the chaos of the crowded Quartier Latin; Act III opens several months later outside a tavern on the edge of the city; and Act IV returns to the Parisian garret a few months after that. Puccini even used the term quadri (pictures) rather than atti (acts) to imply a different, less continuous relationship between them. Within each act, we experience particular, discrete moments of everyday life, reflecting the carpe diem attitude of the bohemians themselves.

The reverse-order concept also highlights Puccini’s compositional innovations, especially the musical and dramatic similarities between La bohème’s opening and closing acts. Set in the same Parisian garret, both begin in medias res, without prologue or prior scene setting, with Marcello and Rodolfo engaged in their respective artistic endeavors. Both acts opening to the same heavily accented, dotted-rhythm figure, establishing what musicologists Arthur Groos and Roger Parker have called an atmosphere of restless energy. (It is worth noting that this opening theme was drawn from one of Puccini’s student compositions and perhaps served as a reminiscence of his own youthful artistic struggles.) In both acts, Schaunard and Colline’s later arrivals are marked in each act by identical musical themes, although the boisterous presentation in Act I becomes more appropriately somber in Act IV. Finally, Mimi’s arias—her Act I “Si. Mi chiamano Mimi” and Act IV “Sono andati?”—serve almost as two sides of the same coin, the latter complete with an extended musical and verbal reprise of the first, culminating in the opening of Rodolfo’s Act I “Che gelida manina,” sung in Act IV by Mimi until a sudden spasm cuts her short.

In a way, despite the novelty of the reverse-order production, today’s audiences have already experienced La bohème as disconnected from its own internal chronology. By listening to excerpted highlights such as the opera’s famous arias and duets (for example, Rodolfo and Mimi’s aforementioned arias, their duet “O soave fanciulla” from the end of Act I, or Musetta’s “Quando me’n vo’ ” from Act II),
we engage with specific dramatic moments, knowing their connection to the broader narrative but without the need to walk through the opera’s full narrative from start to finish. In fact, La bohème itself came to life at almost the precise moment when opera was first being mechanically reproduced via sound recording and cinema. Films were first projected in Italy in March 1896, roughly one month after La bohème’s premiere, with operas being adapted to the screen soon thereafter, and the ensuing years marking the emergence of commercial classical recordings, which became vehicles for popularizing operatic excerpts in particular. When these technologies were new, they were often understood as enabling us to see and hear those no longer with us. Think of this technological ability to recall lost moments or voices as you watch this production. By experiencing the last moments of Mimi’s life before moving back in time to watch the lovers’ immortal meeting and courtship, it is as if we are experiencing past moments quite literally brought back to life after the heroine’s death—much as La bohème’s first audiences would have experienced with the fascinating new technologies of sound recording and film.

“The reverse-order concept also highlights Puccini’s compositional innovations, especially the musical and dramatic similarities between La bohème’s opening and closing acts.”

In depicting the unconventional lives of 19th-century Parisian artists, La bohème in another way is perfectly suited to an unconventional, artistic, and—in a word—bohemian approach of rearranging the order of the acts. In the true spirit of bohemianism, this production focuses on the essence of the artistic and communal experience, without the expectation of replicating established norms. Yet at the same time, by progressing through the acts in reverse order, we nevertheless still experience the timelessness of Puccini’s opera, simply in a way that allows us to see and hear the beloved verismo opera and its characters from a new perspective.
Costume designer Jessica Jahn has created a striking, period-inspired aesthetic foundation for this reimagined La bohème. Bright pastel blues and fanciful children’s costumes bring an exuberance and joy to complement the chronological reversal from tragedy to hope. In this article, Jahn takes us through her design process from idea to execution, and shares costume sketches from this production.

“La bohème is one of those stories that is about a human experience. What happens if we actually tell the story in reverse? Taking that step back, reimagining the characters, their story, what they did before they met each other, they might be reinvented as people that have more dimension than I think a traditional story of Bohème sort of makes them out to be.

Yuval, John [Conklin], John [Torres], and I have conversations about all these inherent conceptual ideas. And then the next step for me is my most favorite part, which is to really dig into the research of the who, what, where, when. I start digging up images that I respond to, first, emotionally, and then slowly add into that going back and forth with the team and Yuval, especially things that then directly relate to the period and what we understand about who these characters were. Then, I start layering all of that together. That’s when the real design process starts, when I’m thinking, “Okay, what is it about all of these parts that I’m responding to and that I like?”

By this point I have something on the page. But then when I get into a shop and start talking with all these amazing technicians and artisans, they help me focus what it is going to look like on the body and how we can get it there. That’s really
when it actually takes more shape—I have this two-dimensional image, but what does that look like when it’s a three-dimensional garment? How do we need to change it and alter it, so that it does what we want it to do visually on stage?

I try as hard as I can to understand that even if they’re fictional characters, that in my head, they’re real people that might have existed. And I want to do honor to those people and make sure that I represent them in a way that is respectful and honest.”
DETOUR, APRIL 15, 1996

“After the ribbon has been cut and Pavarotti has sung, Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) will begin its first season of grand opera and ballet in its new home, the Detroit Opera House. MOT will commence its 25th season on Saturday, April 27 at 8:00 pm with Puccini’s masterpiece, La bohème.”

—Michigan Opera Theatre Press Release

La bohème
at the Detroit Opera House, 1996 – 2022

Twenty-five years after David DiChiera transformed the nascent Overture to Opera into Michigan Opera Theatre in 1971, the company welcomed audiences into a newly renovated Detroit Opera House. As we look ahead to our future as Detroit Opera we also consider our past, and where our company’s journey has taken us. These performances of La bohème mark the sixth run of Puccini’s opera to grace the Detroit Opera House stage over the past 25 years.
Roberto Kalb
CONDUCTOR

Mexican American conductor Roberto Kalb is quickly establishing himself as an artist of great versatility and talent. The 2021–2022 season sees Kalb’s return to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for the premiere of Tobias Picker’s *Awakenings*. He also makes his debut with Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier for a series of concerts featuring the music of Offenbach, Gluck, Grétry, and Clerambault. Announced performances for the 2022–2023 season include his house debut at San Francisco Opera in Gabriela Lena Frank’s *El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego*. Kalb also returns to San Diego Opera to conduct the world premiere of the same piece.

Highlights of previous seasons include Kalb’s debut at Wolf Trap Opera conducting Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd, Rigoletto* with both Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and Kentucky Opera, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *Carmen* with Tulsa Opera, *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Maine, Robert Xavier Rodríguez’s *Frida* with Florida Grand Opera, and his debut with Detroit Opera conducting Ricky Ian Gordon’s *27*.

A native of Mexico City, Kalb holds degrees from the University of Michigan, New England Conservatory of Music, and San Francisco Conservatory of Music.
Marlen Nahhas

**MIMÌ**

Mexican Lebanese soprano Marlen Nahhas began the 2021–2022 season with debuts at Opera Ithaca as Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* and at Virginia Opera as Musetta in *La bohème*, a role she has performed with Opera Naples and Finger Lakes Opera, followed by appearances at Detroit Opera for *Frida* (Cristina Kahlo) and *La bohème* (Mimi), and Cincinnati Opera for *The Pirates of Penzance* (Edith).

She recently completed the Cafritz Young Artists program with Washington National Opera and was seen in *Die Zauberflöte* (Pamina), *La traviata* (Violetta) directed by Francesca Zambello, Jeanine Tesori’s *The Lion, The Unicorn, and Me* (Flamingo), *The Consul* (Foreign Woman), the world premiere of Kamala Sankaram’s *Taking Up Serpents* (Queer Kid), and a *Concert of Comedic Masterpieces*. Orchestral credits include the National Symphony Orchestra for excerpts from *La bohème* (Mimi) and Kansas City Symphony for excerpts from *Le nozze di Figaro* (Susanna).

Marlen was an Apprentice Artist at The Santa Fe Opera, and has been a member of the Merola Opera program at the San Francisco Opera Center and an Apprentice Artist with Central City Opera. A National Semi-Finalist in The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Marlen is a graduate of Oklahoma City University and Indiana University.
American tenor Matthew White recently made critically acclaimed debuts as Roméo in Gounod’s Roméo et Juliette with Cincinnati Opera, the Duca in Rigoletto with Edmonton Opera, and Pinkerton in Puccini’s Madama Butterfly with the Princeton Festival. During the 2021–2022 season, in addition to these Detroit Opera performances as Rodolfo in Yuval Sharon’s new production of La bohème, he also sings Don José in Carmen with Arizona Opera, Lancelot in Chausson’s Le roi Arthus with Bard SummerScape, and Frederic in The Pirates of Penzance with Cincinnati Opera.

Highlights of past seasons include performing the role of Pinkerton with Tulsa Opera, his role and house debuts as Rodolfo with Opera Naples, and with Florida Orchestra as the tenor soloist in Handel’s Messiah. A recent graduate of Philadelphia’s prestigious Academy of Vocal Arts, Matthew made his debut with Opera Maine as Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi and has appeared with Palm Beach Opera and Vero Beach Opera. Among many honors and prizes, he was awarded the Grand Prize of the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition and is the recipient of the Alfonso Cavaliere Award.

A trained violinist, Matthew is also an avid surfer and runs his own surfboard business, which currently has clients around the world.
Edward Parks

MARCELLO

Recipient of a 2019 GRAMMY Award for Best Opera Recording (as Steve Jobs in The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs), baritone Edward Parks made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the 2009–2010 season as Fiorello in Il barbiere di Siviglia and has since appeared there as Figaro in Il barbiere di Siviglia, Schaunard in La bohème, and as Larkens in La fanciulla del West, which was broadcast in HD worldwide. Other notable upcoming engagements include Jack Torrence in The Shining with Opera Colorado, a return to Lyric Opera of Chicago for Proving Up, Songs of a Wayfarer with New York Youth Symphony, and Marcello in La bohème with Detroit Opera and Boston Lyric Opera.

Highlights from past seasons include Steve Jobs in The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs with Santa Fe Opera; the Count in Le nozze di Figaro with Hawaii Opera Theatre; a return to Minnesota Opera as Audebert in Silent Night; revivals of his Escamillo in Carmen with the Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Detroit Opera Festival in Japan and Atlanta Opera; Valentin in Faust with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Portland Opera, and Opera San Antonio; Inman in Cold Mountain with North Carolina Opera; and Belcore in L’elisir d’amore with Opera Oviedo in Spain.
Brandie Inez Sutton

MUSSETTA

Brandie Inez Sutton has appeared in concert halls and on opera stages around the world. Most recently she performed La Fée in Massenet’s *Cendrillon* at The Metropolitan Opera, Musetta from Puccini’s *La bohème* with Seattle Opera, and Gilda in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* with New York City Opera. House debuts for Sutton included Semperoper Dresden, Palacio de Bellas Artes, Opera Maine, Teatro Petruzzelli, and more. In addition to opera houses, she is no stranger to the concert stage and has been featured with many symphony orchestras, including Richmond Symphony Orchestra, South Florida Symphony Orchestra, Royal Danish Symphony Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra, among others. The versatile vocalist is also sought after in many genres, appearing as a guest soloist with Wynton Marsalis’s Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. She excitedly makes several house debuts this season, including Detroit Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, Lakes Area Music Festival, Virginia Opera, and Opera Philadelphia. This season, she also returns to The Metropolitan Opera.

Brandie Sutton’s fervent interest in social justice has also engaged her on many concert stages—more than once has she participated in events for Equal Justice Initiative. She has also been immortalized as a hologram in The Legacy Museum: From Slavery to Mass Incarceration located in Montgomery, Alabama.
Cory McGee

COLLINE

Hailing from Stafford, Virginia, bass Cory McGee opened his 2021–2022 season performing the role of Theseus in Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with Santa Fe Opera. Further engagements this season include Basilio in Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera on the James, and Billy in the world premiere of Joel Thompson’s *The Snowy Day* and Virgil in the world premiere of Nell Shaw Cohen’s *Turn and Burn* with Houston Grand Opera. Cory makes his debut with both Detroit Opera and The Florentine Opera, singing the role of Colline in Puccini’s *La bohème*.

Past highlights include performing in the Houston Grand Opera’s Studio Showcase and Rienzi Recital Series, producing a full recording of Schubert’s *Schwanengesang*. Recent operatic roles include the Sodbuster in Mizzy Mazzoli’s *Proving Up*, and Publio in Mozart’s *La clemenza di Tito*, both with Rice Opera Theatre. Most recently, McGee was a finalist in both the Pasadena Vocal Competition and the Houston Grand Opera’s 32nd annual Eleanor McCollum Competition.

McGee joined Santa Fe Opera as an Apprentice Artist for the 2019 season, portraying the role of the Gardener in Ruder’s *The Thirteenth Child*. In 2018, he was seen with Wolf Trap Opera as a Studio Artist, performing the role of La Voce in Mozart’s *Idomeneo*, and Ranger Nat in Wolf Trap’s commissioned children’s opera David Hanlon’s *Listen, Wilhelmina!*
Benjamin Taylor

SCHAUNARD

Baritone Benjamin Taylor began the 2021–2022 season making his debut at The Metropolitan Opera in Fire Shut Up in My Bones (Chester) and makes debuts with Detroit Opera and Spoleto Festival USA in La bohème (Schaunard), Cincinnati Opera for the world premiere of Castor and Patience (West), North Carolina Opera for Sanctuary Road (William Still), Baltimore Concert Opera for Adriana Lecouvreur (Michonnet), and a return to Pittsburgh Opera for Die Zauberflöte (Papageno).

Recent engagements include a return to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for Opera on the Go – Digital, and debuts with Fargo-Moorhead Opera for Il barbiere di Siviglia (Figaro), Opera Orlando for The Secret River (Augustus), and Des Moines Metro Opera for Pique Dame (Tomsky), Platée (Satyre), and Fellow Travelers (Tommy McIntyre). He also made a last-minute appearance with LA Opera in La bohème (Schaunard).

Benjamin is a graduate of the Pittsburgh Opera Resident Artist Program and has been an Apprentice Artist at The Santa Fe Opera as well as a Gerdine Young Artist and Richard Gaddes Festival Artist at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. He received his Master of Music from Boston University, his Performer’s Certificate with Boston University’s Opera Institute, and his Bachelor of the Arts from Morgan State University.
Jonathan Lasch

ALCINDORO

Jonathan Lasch has been described by critics as possessing a voice of “arresting color and heft,” that is “smooth and flexible,” “thrillingly resonant and firm-lined,” a performer who is a “master of the stage” and a “tour de force.” Upcoming performances include Alcindoro in La bohème with Detroit Opera, bass soloist in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the Michigan Philharmonic, and Vicar in Benjamin Britten’s Albert Herring with the Princeton Festival. Most recently, Lasch performed as Sam in Leonard Bernstein’s Trouble in Tahiti with Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival and Hannah Before in As One with Aepex Contemporary Performance at Kerrytown Concert Hall on the opera stage.

On the concert stage, Jonathan most recently sang the title role in Mendelssohn’s Elijah with Chorus America and the baritone soloist in Jocelyn Hagen’s amass with Eugene Rogers in Hill Auditorium. He also performed Schubert’s Schwanengesang several times on concert stages across Michigan.

Dr. Lasch is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Voice at Wayne State University in Detroit. Jonathan is excited to return to the Detroit Opera stage where he premiered as Leporello in Don Giovanni and performed Marco in View from the Bridge. He lives in Ferndale with his wife, Caitlin Lynch, and their three wonderful children.
George Shirley

THE WANDERER

One of America’s most versatile tenors and enlightened musicians, George Shirley remains in demand nationally and internationally as performer, teacher, and lecturer. He has won international acclaim for his performances with The Metropolitan Opera, and with major opera houses and festivals in England, Germany, Austria, Argentina, the Netherlands, Monte Carlo, Scotland, Italy, Japan, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Santa Fe, and Detroit, among others. Shirley has recorded for the RCA, Columbia, Decca, Angel, Vanguard, CRI, Capriccio, Philips, and Albany labels; he received a GRAMMY Award in 1968 for his role (Ferrando) in the prize-winning RCA recording of Mozart’s Così fan tutte. He has performed more than 80 operatic roles over the span of his 57-year career, as well as oratorio and concert literature with some of the world’s most renowned orchestras.

Shirley was the first black tenor and second African American male to sing leading roles with The Metropolitan Opera, where he remained for 11 years as leading artist. He was the first black high school vocal music teacher in the Detroit Public Schools and the first black member of the United States Army Chorus in Washington, D.C. In 2015, he received the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama.

George Shirley is The Joseph Edgar Maddy Distinguished University Emeritus Professor of Music at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance.
Jessica Annunziata ACTOR

Jessica Annunziata is a second-year MFA actor and creator at Wayne State University. She holds a BFA from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts and has also studied at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting and the Wits School of the Arts in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has created and performed with the Deconstructive Theatre Project at HERE Arts Center and the Public Theatre’s Under the Radar Festival, and served as a teaching artist working with people from students to entrepreneurs. She was most recently seen as Bets in *Fairview* and Love in *Everybody* at Wayne State University. She is incredibly honored to be part of this gorgeous production.

Biba Bell ACTOR

Biba Bell is a dancer, choreographer, and writer based in Detroit. Her choreographic work, often set in unconventional venues, focuses on domesticity, labor, and architecture, and has been presented at Roulette Intermedium, the Kitchen, Movement Research at Judson Church, Centre Pompidou Paris, Garage for Contemporary Culture, Jack Hanley Gallery, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, Insel Hombroich, amongst others. She has performed with Maria Hassabi and Walter Dundervill and was a founding member of Modern Garage Movement (2005–2011). She earned her PhD in Performance Studies from New York University and is an Assistant Professor in Dance at Wayne State University.

Hank Felix ACTOR

Hank Felix studied acting at Savannah College of Art & Design, Point Park University, and Interlochen, where he played Macduff in *Macbeth* and was awarded the Fine Arts Award for Repertory Theater. He attended the Putney School in Putney, Vermont. He will appear in the upcoming Netflix movie *Pale Blue Eye*. Hank grew up in New Jersey and London, England, and is currently living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
X. Alexander Durden  **ACTOR**

X. Alexander Durden is a tenor, actor, and writer. He has previously been seen in the Detroit Opera productions of *Twilight: Gods* and *BLISS*. He has also appeared as a recitalist and concert soloist throughout the US, Canada, and Bermuda. Adding his name to the rosters of The Atlanta, Americolor, and Capitol City Opera Companies, he has also performed at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center and Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles. Favorite roles include Jones Morgan in the National Tour of Buffalo Soldier (Virginia Repertory Theatre), Il Cuoco in *Madama Butterfly* (The Atlanta Opera), Max in *The Play That Goes Wrong* (Tipping Point Theatre), and Belmonte in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Capitol City Opera). X. Alexander received undergraduate voice training at Morehouse College and graduate training in voice and acting at the Boston Conservatory and Wayne State University, respectively.

**Peter Knox  **ACTOR**

Downriver-born, Detroit-raised Peter Knox has played on local stages including The Detroit Repertory Theater and Shakespeare in Detroit as King Lear, as well as acting and directing for several years with The Performance Network of Ann Arbor. He has more recently been in films including Spencer King’s *Time Now*, Danny Villanueva’s *I Dream of A Psychopomp*, Jackson Jarvis’s *Neptune*, and August Leo’s soon-to-be-released UP film *Attack Of The Flies*. Peter is thrilled to be back on stage with Detroit Opera.

**Alexis Primus  **ACTOR**

Alexis Primus is thrilled to be a part of her first opera. They are currently a student at Wayne State University and was previously in *A Christmas Carol* with Tipping Point Theatre in Northville. Her favorite credits include Marie Antionette in *Marie Antoinette* and Sophie Washington in *Flyin’ West*.
Yuval Sharon has amassed an unconventional body of work that expands the operatic form. He is founder and Artistic Director of The Industry in Los Angeles and the recently appointed Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director of Detroit Opera.

With The Industry, Sharon has directed and produced new operas in moving vehicles, operating train stations, Hollywood sound stages, and various “non-spaces” such as warehouses, parking lots, and escalator corridors. From 2016 to 2019, Sharon was the first Artist-in-Residence at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, creating nine projects that included newly commissioned works, site-specific installations, and performances outside the hall. His residency culminated in a major revival of Meredith Monk’s opera ATLAS, making him the first director Monk entrusted with a new production of her work.

The first American ever invited to direct at Bayreuth, Sharon distinguished himself with a boldly progressive Lohengrin in 2018, using subtle dramatic direction to completely overhaul the opera into a critique of entrenched power structures. He is the recipient of the 2014 Götz Friedrich Prize in Germany for his production of John Adams’s Doctor Atomic. He also directed a landmark production of Song Books at the San Francisco Symphony and Carnegie Hall. In 2017, Sharon was honored with a MacArthur Fellowship and a Foundation for Contemporary Art grant for theater.
John Conklin
SET DESIGNER

John Conklin has designed for The Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Theater of St Louis, Glimmerglass Opera, and the opera companies of Houston, Seattle, Dallas, Washington and Minneapolis, among others. Abroad he has worked at the English National Opera, the Bayerische Staatsoper, and The Australian Opera. In addition, he served as Director of Production for New York City Opera, Associate Director of Glimmerglass Opera, and he is currently Artistic Advisor to Boston Lyric Opera. He recently retired from teaching at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University.
ARTIST PROFILES

Jessica Jahn
COSTUME DESIGNER

A graduate of Rutgers University with degrees in both Dance and Psychology, Jessica Jahn danced professionally in New York City before beginning a career in design. She has had the opportunity to work with directors such as Tina Landau, Tommy Kail, Francesca Zambello, Charles Randolph Wright, Tazewell Thompson, Liesl Tommy, Diane Paulus, and Jessica Blank, as well as writers/composers Charles Fuller, Norah Ephron, Andrea Davis Pinkney, Kevin Puts, Jake Heggie, Steve Earle, Tracy K. Smith, Mark Campbell, and Charles Busch.

Known for her work in the traditional repertoire, she is also dedicated to innovative work within her field. Jessica collaborated on one of the earliest performances of Tarell Alvin McRaney’s *In The Red and Brown Water*, directed by Tina Landau. She designed *Blue*, written by Tazewell Thompson and composed by Jeanine Tesori, winner of the MCANA Award for Best New Opera, and worked with Jessica Blank, Eric Jensen, and Steve Earle on The Public’s world premiere of *Coal Country*. She was awarded both the Lucille Lortel and Drama Desk Awards for her design of Charles Busch’s *The Confession of Lily Dare*.

Dedicated to racial and social justice, Jessica is currently a member of the steering committees of Opera America’s Women’s Opera Network (WON) and Racial Justice Opera Network (RJON), as well as Opera America Board’s Membership Committee.
John Torres  
LIGHTING DESIGNER


Joanne Middleton Weaver  
WIG & MAKEUP DESIGNER

Born in England, Joanne Weaver came to the United States in the late 1980s. She began apprenticeship with what was then Washington Opera, now Washington National Opera. She has since designed at many opera companies throughout the US, including Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Des Moines Metro Opera. Her notable Michigan Opera Theatre (now Detroit Opera) credits include *Die Zauberflöte, Macbeth, The Passenger, Frida, The Merry Widow, Faust, Margaret Garner, Cyrano*, and *The Pearl Fishers*. 

JOHNNED DETROIT OPERA 39
Suzanne Mallare Acton  
**CHORUS MASTER**

From Handel’s *Messiah* to contemporary jazz, Suzanne Mallare Acton is recognized for her versatility and dynamic style. For Michigan Opera Theatre, her conducting credits include *West Side Story, Il barbiere di Siviglia, The Music Man, The Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, La bohème, Die Fledermaus, La traviata, A Little Night Music, La fille du régiment, Carmina Burana* with members of Cirque du Soleil, *The Medium, Frida,* and *Les pêcheurs de perles.* Additional credits include Dayton Opera, Artpark, Augusta Opera, Wharton Center for the Performing Arts, Auditorium Theatre, and Verdi Opera Theatre. Symphonic concerts include Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, Lexington Bach Festival, Dearborn Symphony, and Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra. For 25 years, Suzanne was artistic director of Rackham Choir (RC). Under her leadership, RC was awarded the 2008 Governor’s Award for Arts & Culture.

As long-term chorus master of Michigan Opera Theatre, now Detroit Opera, Suzanne has worked on over 160 productions in seven languages. She is also the founder and director of the Michigan Opera Theatre Children’s Chorus. She has been recognized by *Corp!* Magazine as one of Michigan’s 95 Most Powerful Women. In 2014, she was one of 12 women selected as WJR’s Women Who Lead.
What began as an idea by David DiChiera, founder of Detroit Opera (formerly known as Michigan Opera Theatre), the company who continues to own and operate today’s Detroit Opera House, blossomed into a magnificent performing arts center with its formal opening in 1996.

A new 128-page book celebrating the centenary of the theater that is now the Detroit Opera House.

Available at The Detroit Shoppe at The Somerset Collection and online at arcadiapublishing.com
Located on the corners of Broadway Street and Madison Street at Grand Circus Park, the theater now known as the Detroit Opera House was originally opened January 12, 1922, as the Capitol Theater. At the time of its gala premiere, the 4,250-seat theater claimed to be the fifth largest in the world.

The theater was the first in a series of palatial vaudeville and moving picture houses built in the Grand Circus Park area in the 1920s. Designed by renowned Detroit architect C. Howard Crane, whose genius for theater design took him to cities around the nation, the building was constructed with superb acoustics and in the style of the grand European opera houses. Crane also designed such Detroit landmarks as the Fox Theater, State Theater, and the acoustically perfect Orchestra Hall.

In the fall of 1929, the Capitol Theater became the Paramount Theater and, in 1934, was renamed the Broadway Capitol Theater. Within the first few decades, the grand theater hosted the likes of Will Rogers, Louis Armstrong, Betty Hutton, Guy Lombardo, and Duke Ellington, and later, Gale Storm, Sal Mineo, and many of the rock and roll stars of the 1950s.

After several years of near decay, the theater underwent a minor restoration in 1960. The renamed and reconfigured 3,367-seat Grand Circus Theater became a movie house once again. The Grand Circus Theater closed its doors in 1978 and reopened under the same name in 1981. From 1981 to 1985 the theater ran intermittently, presenting a diversity of entertainment from mainstream artists Ray Charles and Roy Orbison to an alternative rock series entitled “Grand Circus Live.” The 1922 palace closed its doors for the last time in November of 1985, after a small fire. The theater would be neglected for three years until the nomadic Detroit Opera (then Michigan Opera Theatre) met its destiny.
The Capitol, “Detroit’s Foremost Playhouse,” 1923. This theater formally opened on January 12, 1922.

The Capitol becomes the Paramount Theatre, 1929. From August 1929 through December 1932, this venue was owned and operated by the Publix Theatre division of Paramount Pictures.

The Paramount in all of its glory, 1931.

Following the closure as a movie palace, 1978. When Community Theatres decided to close the venue, they added a veiled message (“Closed Temporarily”) on the marquee and boarded up the doors on Broadway and Madison Avenue.


Dreaming of reopening the doors, 1990s. General director David Di Chiera and managing director Kim Johnson lead a group tour of the venue.

One of many group tours, 1990s. David Di Chiera leads a group of prospective donors through the restoration process of converting the Grand Circus Theatre into the new Detroit Opera House.

The haunted look of the Grand Lobby, 1990. The temporary shop lights provide a stark look to the grand lobby prior to the actual restoration phase of the theater.

The rare artform of wet plastering, 1995. This plasterer is working on a delicate design on the ceiling of the auditorium.

Overview of the expanded stage, 2000. The stage of the new Detroit Opera House is the largest in Michigan and one of the largest between New York and Chicago.
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In remembrance of our founder and long-term general director, The David DiChiera Artistic Fund has been established to support and honor his artistic vision.

This fund enables Detroit Opera to produce compelling opera, present innovative dance, and engage with thousands of students and members of our community through our educational and outreach programs. Most importantly, it allows Detroit Opera to preserve David’s legacy and his dedication to the young people of Southeast Michigan and young emerging artists from all over the country.

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CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE DETROIT OPERA HOUSE

The Detroit Opera Board of Directors began the first phase of fundraising for Detroit Opera House capital improvements in January 2020. This multi-phase capital campaign grew from recommendations identified in the facilities master plan completed by Albert Kahn Associates, Inc. Scheduled facility improvements and upgrades will shape the patron experience at the Opera House for years to come.

We look forward to sharing full details about the capital campaign in the coming months. Until then, we extend heartfelt thanks to the following donors who made contributions that enabled capital improvements to begin.

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The Italian word avanti means “ahead,” or “forward.” Detroit Opera’s Avanti Society represents a designated group of friends who have made plans to include Detroit Opera in their estates—whether by will, trust, insurance, or life income arrangement. We are grateful for the generosity and foresight of those listed below, who have chosen to declare their intentions and join the Avanti Society. *Thank You Avanti Society Members!*

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