

Andrew Alka, tenor, is from Prairie Village, Kansas and is a junior at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education. He currently studies voice with Steven Tharp, though is on the conducting side of the stage for this performance. Andrew serves as the current student director of the Chordbusters Barbershop Ensemble and has been featured in two conducting performances with the First Christian Church Chancel Choir, but is making his collegiate conducting debut with *Peter Grimes* in this show. He is beyond thankful for the opportunity and excited to showcase the immense talent of every individual on stage!

Maya Anand, soprano, is from Saint Louis, Missouri and is currently a senior at the University of Missouri. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Journalism and a Bachelor of Arts in Music, and she currently studies voice with Christina Ray. Maya is involved in many vocal ensembles at MU, including University Singers, Show-Me Opera, and Ars Nova. She is also a violinist in the University Philharmonic Orchestra. Roles Maya has performed include: Flower Girl in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Ginevra in *Ariodante*, and Princess Adélaïde in the world premiere of Felix Jarrar's *Pompadour Porcelain*. She has also covered the role of Tytania in Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and recently performed in the chorus of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. Maya can next be seen performing the role of Elsie Maynard in Show-Me Opera's spring production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. In April 2024, Maya received 1st place at Mid-MO NATS in the upper-level treble classical category and 3rd place in the upper-level musical theatre category. Maya also studies Indian classical music and has given several concerts in her hometown, as well as in cities across India.

Dorion Bailey, Tenor, is from St. Louis, Missouri and is a Sophomore at the University of Missouri. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor Science in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Music. He is a member of Mizzou's premier ensemble, University Singers, directed by Dr. Brandon Boyd. Dorion can next be seen performing as 1st Yeomen in Mizzou's upcoming opera *The Yeomen of the Guard*. This will be Dorion's first performance in an Opera. He is so excited to make his operatic debut!

Erin Brage, mezzo-soprano, is from Kansas City, Missouri. She is a junior at Mizzou studying Business Administration and Music with an emphasis in Vocal Performance. During her studies, she has been involved in Landlocked Opera, Show-Me Opera, University Singers, staged arias, Canticum Novum Chamber Choir, and Ars Nova. She has been taking voice lessons from Professor Christina Ray since 2022. Prior to college, she took lessons from Jill Hemann. Erin has been in the chorus of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Benjamin Britten, Handel's *Ariodante*, and Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. In April 2023, she received 2nd place at Mid-MO NATS in the

lower-level treble division. Prior to college, she was a member of the KC Metro All-District Choir from 2019-2021 and the Missouri All-State Choir in 2022.

Elise Cressey, soprano, is from Kansas City, Missouri and is a transfer student at the University of Missouri. She is pursuing a BA in music, as well as double majoring in Communications. She is studying voice with Christina Ray and has also performed in a variety of shows. Since attending Mizzou, she has participated in University Singers, the university's Bach Collegium Choir, Canticum Novum, and Show-Me Opera. Most recently, she has performed as Dalinda from Handel's *Ariodante*, as well as Landlocked Opera's production of *L'elisir d'amore*.

Elijah Elliott, bass-baritone, is from Moberly, Missouri and is a freshman at the University of Missouri. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Music as well as in Linguistics. He currently studies voice with Steven Tharp. Though this is Elijah's first foray into opera, he has a long history in musical theater, performing many shows with Columbia's own TRYPs Theater. Elijah looks forward to being a part of Show-Me Opera's upcoming production of *The Yeoman of the Guard*, in which he will play the role of Wilfred Shadbolt.

Ja'wan Footman, a bass-baritone, is an exceptional and dynamic performer whose talent has captivated audiences across diverse stages. A proud graduate of Florida A&M University, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Music with a specialization in Voice Performance. While at FAMU, Ja'wan performed in iconic operatic productions like *Carmen* and *Die Zauberflöte*, and served as the Bass Section Leader for the Concert Choir, leading them to prestigious events such as the Florida Music Educators Association and a historic performance at Carnegie Hall. His career has been marked by a commitment to honing his craft, participating in master classes, workshops, and symposiums, and earning accolades, including nominations for the Collegiate Honors Choir Performance and a solo at the Alabama ACDA. Ja'wan's artistic journey continues at the University of Missouri, where he is pursuing his Master's in Voice Performance under Professor Steven Tharp and Dr. Brandon Boyd. Recently, Ja'wan performed as King Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with the Columbia Civic Orchestra and Choral Arts Alliance, and portrayed King Re in Handel's *Ariodante* with Show-Me Opera. His unwavering passion and dedication to the performing arts promise a bright future ahead.

Austin Gaskin, baritone, is a PhD candidate in Music Education at the University of Missouri and graduate teaching assistant in the Group Piano Department. He currently studies voice with Dr. Alexandra Schoeny, and made his opera debut in the role of Theseus in the University of Missouri's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2023.

Aidan Gildehaus (he/him), tenor, is from St. Louis, Missouri. He is currently an undergraduate at the University of Missouri, where he studies Vocal Performance, and is instructed by Prof. Trent Rash. Previous credits include *The Baker (Into the Woods, FHS)*, Sheriff Schmid/Preacher u/s (*Bonnie and Clyde, GCPA*), and Audrey II (*Little Shop of Horrors, ECC*) and as a Chorus Member in Show-Me Opera's production of Handel's *Ariodante* and Landlocked Opera's production of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. Aidan can next be seen as Dame Carruthers in Show-Me Opera's *The Yeomen of the Guard*. He is a member of University Singers, MU's premier choral ensemble, conducted by Dr. Brandon Boyd. Additionally, Aidan is the Webmaster of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Zeta Chapter. Aidan recently won first place in the undergraduate lower voice Musical Theatre category at the 2023 Central Region NATS Competition, qualifying to compete at National NATS, and first place at the 2024 Mid-Missouri NATS for the same division. Many thanks to friends and family for all the support.

Jack Grant, tenor, is in their fifth undergraduate year at the University of Missouri-Columbia studying Music. An active member in the Mizzou School of Music, Jack is the former president for the Zeta chapter of the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia fraternity, as well as the current music director and the Canticum Novum chamber choir, a premier student-led undergraduate chamber ensemble in the state of Missouri. Jack is currently a member of the Mizzou University Singers, directed by Dr. Brandon Boyd. Since beginning college, Jack has transferred their passion for performing into their work for the Show-Me Opera program, performing in choruses for opera scenes and a full-length production of *Falstaff*. They also have held scene roles as "Laurie" in *Little Women*, "Guglielmo" in *Così Fan Tutte*, "Eisenstein" in *Die Fledermaus*, and "Antonio" in a Full-length production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. They also have had roles as "Starveling" in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as "Lurcanio" in Handel's *Ariodante*. Jack also works part-time as an audio engineer and producer, working with local Columbia artists like *The Brink* and *Paintroom* (in which they played bass guitar), as well as well-known gospel artists such as Josh Runnels and grammy-winner Dorinda Clark-Cole. Jack intends on finishing their current degree before pursuing a master's degree in music education before pursuing a doctoral degree in choral conducting.

Josh Goldman, tenor, is from Saint Louis, Missouri, and a sophomore at the University of Missouri. He is currently pursuing a double major in Business, along with a BA in Music. He currently takes voice lessons under Christina Ray. This is the first opera production that Josh is performing in.

Kelsey Hale is a mezzo-soprano from Saint Charles, Missouri and is ecstatic to be singing in her second opera scenes program! She is a sophomore at Mizzou, pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and currently studying under Trent Rash. Kelsey has enjoyed performing in

several school and community musicals, such as *Bye Bye Birdie* (2020); *Tuck Everlasting* (2020); *Legally Blonde, Jr.* (2022); and *Footloose!* (2022). At Mizzou, she found her niche in Show-Me Opera, cast in the chorus of Handel's *Ariodante* (2024) and as the Phoebe Meryll cover in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard* (2025). She is involved in several of Mizzou's ensembles: Concert Chorale, under the direction of Dr. Kari Adams; Canticum Novum, as an assistant conductor; and MU Golden Dynamics, as a section leader. Beyond voice, Kelsey has studied classical piano for 13 years and enjoys collaborative work with her peers. She loves being a part of this cast and hopes you enjoy the show!

Emma Harper, soprano, is a freshman at the University of Missouri. She is from Lake Zurich, Illinois and is pursuing a Bachelor of Journalism and a Bachelor of Arts in Music along with a minor in French. She studies voice with Dr. Alexandra Schoeny. This is Emma's first experience with opera, though she has been involved in theater for many years. She is so excited to perform with such a talented cast!

Natasha Haverly, a soprano, came from Saint Charles, Missouri, to study at the University of Missouri, Columbia. She is currently a freshman at Mizzou and is pursuing majors in both a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance and Banking. She is also planning to add a minor in piano, as well as a possible minor in entrepreneurship. As part of her first year musical journey along with participating in Show-Me Opera, she is currently a member of the Concert Chorale choir, organized and run by Dr. Kari Adams, and studies in vocal lessons under the instruction of Trent Rash. She has had numerous past experiences as a featured soloist in different settings, and began her piano journey at six years old. This is her first time performing with the opera program at Mizzou, and she couldn't be more honored to sing alongside so many incredibly talented musicians!

Margaret Hosking, Mezzo-Soprano, is from Kansas City Missouri. She currently attends the University of Missouri where she studies Music Education and is instructed by Dr. Alexandra Schoeny. Margaret is involved in many of the University's ensembles including University Singers, and Canticum Novum. This is Margaret's first production with Show-Me Opera and is excited to perform with a talented group of performers!

Katherine "Katie" Jones, soprano, is from Kansas City, Missouri and is currently a second year student at The University of Missouri. Katie is a member of the honors college, pursuing an undergraduate degree in Vocal Performance, and is a Discovery Fellows Scholar, researching under the mentorship of Dr. Kari Adams. She studies voice under Professor Christina Ray and is a member of both University Singers under the direction of Dr. Brandon Boyd and Show Me Opera under the direction of Christina Ray and Steven Tharp. This is her second year in the

opera program where she has previously participated in both Opera Scenes, Staged Arias, and Handel's *Ariodante*, where she covered the role of Ginevra.

Zoe Kersey is a soprano from Saint Charles, Missouri. She has found her home at the MU School of Music and is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education. She studies with Christina Ray, co-director of Show-Me Opera, and is a member of the university's Concert Chorale, directed by Dr. Kari Adams. This is her second time in Mizzou's Opera Scenes production, and she is honored to perform alongside such a talented group of people!

Kennedy Kinnick, mezzo-soprano, is from Raymore, Missouri and a junior at the University of Missouri. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. She currently studies voice with Christina Ray. Roles Kennedy has performed include; Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*, Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Polinesso in Handel's *Ariodante*. Most recently she performed in Landlocked Opera's production of *L'elisir d'amore*. She is thrilled to be involved in tonight's performance!

Wendy Kleintank, soprano and violinist, is currently a senior at the University of Missouri and is pursuing a BM in Performance with an emphasis in violin and voice. Wendy has performed as Tytania in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, sang as soprano soloist for Handel's *Messiah*, was asked to sing with the Manchester choir at Carnegie Hall for Lynn's *A Family Portrait*, and was one of the winners of the Emerging Artist's Competition at the University of Missouri School of Music in the spring of 2024. On violin, Wendy has won first place for the MMTA State Competition twice, was accepted into the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America and performed at Carnegie Hall, and she was awarded the Leah Lou Emmons Orchestral String award for outstanding performance in orchestra this past spring. Additionally, she has served as concertmaster for the University Philharmonic orchestra for *Elgar's Enigma Variations*, Handel's *Ariodante*, and upcoming will be concertmaster for Bernstein's Mass with Choral Union. She currently studies violin with Professor Eva Szekely and voice with Dr. Alexandra Schoeny.

Vaysia Knust, Soprano, hails from Kansas City, Missouri. She is a senior, pursuing her Bachelor of Music-Vocal Performance at the University of Missouri and is studying voice under the direction of Christina Ray. Vaysia is part of many ensembles at the University such as University Singers (Dr. Brandon Boyd) Hitt st. Harmony (Casey Wood), Mizzou Golden Dynamics (Michael Hark), and Show me Opera (Christina Ray and Stephen Tharp). Roles Vaysia has performed include; Mustardseed in Show me Opera's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Dalinda in Show me Opera's *Ariodante*. Most recently Vaysia was the cover for Giannetta in Landlocked Opera's *L'elisir d'amore*. She is delighted to be part of such an incredible cast and to perform in Show me Opera's *Opera from the Black Box*.

Sam Romine, baritone, is a 5th-year music student at University of Missouri from Dallas, Texas. He is a life-long performer: having performed in the children's chorus for the Dallas Opera's production of Carmen, the chorus in Show Me Opera's *Ariodante*, and is excited to play the role of the Lieutenant of the Tower in Show Me Opera's production of *The Yeomen of the Guard* in the spring.

Jessica Scearce, soprano, is from Gower, Missouri. She is currently a senior at the University of Missouri, where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Hospitality Management, as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music. She is currently studying with Professor Steven Tharp and has been a member of Show-Me Opera for five years. This semester she has taken on the roles of Ellen in Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* and Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Some of her previous roles include Mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Peter Quince in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Jessica is very excited to be able to perform with tonight's cast!

Miles Skaggs, Baritone, is from Salem, Missouri. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education. He currently studies voice with Christina Ray. He is a member of Mizzou's premier ensemble, University Singers, directed by Dr. Brandon Boyd. Miles can next be seen performing as Sir Richard Cholmondeley in Mizzou's upcoming opera *The Yeomen of the Guard*. This will be his first performance in an Opera. He is so excited to make his operatic debut!

Christopher Songco, tenor, is from St. Louis, Missouri. He is a freshman at the University of Missouri. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal/Choral Education, and he studies voice with Professor Earl Coleman. This is one of Chris' first public performances in his undergraduate studies, and he is exhilarated to be a part of tonight's production!

Gunnar Stanford, bass-baritone, is from Lee's Summit, Missouri and is a freshman at the University of Missouri. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education and studies voice with Christina Ray. Gunnar is a part of Marching Mizzou as well as Concert Chorale and will be a part of the upcoming spring opera production *The Yeomen of the Guard* starring as Sergeant Meryll.

Connor Stratton, a tenor hailing from the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois, recently completed his Bachelor's degree in vocal performance at the prestigious Jacobs School of Music, where he studied under the tutelage of Mary Ann Hart, Cathy Compton, and Julia Bentley. Connor has contributed his vocal talents to the Opera Chorus for IU Opera Theater's productions of *The Magic Flute*, *H.M.S Pinafore*, *L'Étoile*, and *Candide*. Additionally, he participated in an IU Gilbert

and Sullivan Society performance, prepared operatic scenes in the Undergraduate Opera Workshop under the direction of Michael Shell, and served as a soloist in the 2022 IU summer chorus conducted by Walter Huff. Currently, Connor is pursuing his Master's degree in vocal performance at the University of Missouri, under the mentorship of Steven Tharp. This coming spring, he will be performing the role of Colonel Fairfax in the University of Missouri's production of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Recently, Connor showcased his vocal prowess as a soloist in the University Singers' fall concert and undertook the role of Nemorino cover for Landlocked Opera's production of *L'elisir d'amore*. Connor is looking forward to performing a wide variety of scenes for you this evening alongside fellow talented young artists.

Molly Symmonds, mezzo-soprano, is from Kansas City, Missouri, and is currently a junior at the University of Missouri. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a Bachelor of Arts in Music, and is studying with Christina Ray. Ms. Symmonds is a member of the University of Missouri's University Singers and Show-Me Opera. She has performed in a variety of shows, some of her favorite roles including Douglas Panch and Olive's Mom in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and Katherine Blake in *Freaky Friday*. Most recently, she performed in the chorus and covered the role of Polinesso in the Show-Me Opera's production of Handel's *Ariodante*, and previously performed in the chorus of Show-Me Opera's production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Jinhong Yoo is pursuing a master's degree in piano performance under Dr. Miyamoto at the University of Missouri. Mr. Yoo completed his bachelor's degree at Kookmin University in Korea, where he achieved top practical scores and performed with the university orchestra. As a soloist, he has won prizes in various competitions, including the Seoul Orchestra Competition, Jefferson City Orchestra Competition, and MMTA. He has also performed in recitals at the Korea National University of Arts and the esteemed Seoul Arts Center as a collaborative pianist. He is a member of the Bene Trio and currently performs with the New Music Ensemble at Mizzou.

Hanyu Zhang, a Chinese pianist who won second prize in the 2021 Conero International Piano Competition, China Division, and third prize in the Chang Jiang Piano Competition. Currently a graduate assistant at the University of Missouri, where he studies with Dr. Peter Miyamoto. He has given several solo and ensemble recitals around the world.