



School of Music
University of Missouri

2025-2026 Series | Large Ensemble



Steven Tharp, Stage Director

Rachelle Jonck, Guest Musical Director

Jinhong Yoo and Bomi Kim, Pianists

Connor Stratton, Graduate Stage Director (Lucia)

Katie Jones, Supertitles

Lauren Young, Lighting Designer

Saturday, November 8 and Sunday, November 9, 2025

7:00PM • Missouri Theatre

Program

***Così fan tutte* Act I, Scene 2 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
(1756-1791)

Fiordiligi: **Maya Anand**

Dorabella: **Molly Symmonds** (Nov. 8) / **Kennedy Kinnick** (Nov. 9)

Ferrando: **Aidan Gildehaus** (Nov. 8) / **Connor Stratton** (Nov. 9)

Guglielmo: **Miles Skaggs**

Don Alfonso: **Carter Thiemann** (Nov. 8) / **Diego Halbeck** (Nov. 9)

Military Recruiters: **Emma Harper, Aaron Wucher, Noah Carlson, Hunter Garner**

***Lucia di Lammermoor* Act III, Scene 2 Gaetano Donizetti**
(1797-1848)

Lucia: **Elise Cressey**

Raimondo: **Javik Hodson**

Enrico: **Carter Thiemann**

Ensemble

Intermission

***Falstaff* Act I, scene 2 Giuseppe Verdi**
(1813-1901)

Alice: **Erin Brage**

Meg: **Omolara Ogunmola** (Nov. 8) / **Kelsey Hale** (Nov. 9)

Nanetta: **Katie Jones**

Quickly: **Emmaline Brown** (Nov. 8) / **Kennedy Kinnick** (Nov. 9)

Fenton: **Connor Stratton**

Ford: **Carter Thiemann**

Dr. Caius: **Aidan Gildehaus** (Nov. 8) / **Joshua Goldman** (Nov. 9)

Bardolfo: **Chris Songco**

Pistola: **Hunter Garner**

***La rondine* Act II finale Giacomo Puccini**
(1858-1924)

Magda: **Grace Gard**

Ruggiero: **Andrew Gwin**

Lisette: **Katie Jones**

Prunier: **Connor Stratton**

Rambaldo: **Carter Thiemann**

Voice: **Natasha Haverly**

Whistler: **Chris Songco**

Ensemble

Show-Me Opera Ensemble

Ashlynnne Alexander, Maya Anand, Erin Brage, Emmaline Brown,
Noah Carlson, Elise Cressey, Elizabeth Dorman, Grace Gard, Hunter Garner,
Joshua Goldman, Andrew Gwin, Aidan Gildehaus, Diego Halback,
Kelsey Hale, Emma Harper, Javik Hodson, Natasha Haverly, Sydney Jean,
Katie Jones, Zoe Kersey, Kennedy Kinnick, Omolara Ogunmola,
Zoey Roberds, Miles Skaggs, Christopher Songco, Connor Stratton,
Molly Symmonds, Carter Thiemann, Aaron Wucher

Acknowledgements

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Susan Worstell
Lucy Urlacher
Johanna Griffith
Mark Anderson
Cory Broadack
Parker Johnson

Christina Ray
Alexandra Schoeny
Anna Mandina
Peter Miyomoto
Rachel AuBuchon

The Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center

President Mun Choi

Our Next Production:

Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel* (sung in English)

Prof. Christian Ray, Stage Director

Dr. John McKeever, Conductor

Missouri Theater

Friday, March 13 and Saturday, March 14, 2026 at 7 pm



M School of Music
University of Missouri
Show Me Opera Presents:

Hansel & Gretel

Sat, March 14 @ 7pm
&
Sun, March 15 @ 2pm
Missouri Theatre

An opera by
Engelbert
Humperdinck
sung in English

Tickets:
Adults: \$15
Students: Free

Prof. Christina Ray,
Stage Director

Dr. John McKeever,
Conductor

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Biographies

Ashlynn Alexander is a first-year Music Education major at Mizzou, where she studies voice and pursues her passion for teaching and performance. Outside of singing, she enjoys reading, drawing. After completing her degree, she hopes to become a high school choir director, inspiring young musicians to discover their voices. She is excited to continue growing as a musician, performer, and leader through her studies and participation in the university's vocal and choral programs.

Maya Anand, soprano, is from Saint Louis, Missouri and is a fifth-year undergraduate student at the University of Missouri. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Journalism and a Bachelor of Arts in music, and she studies voice with Christina Ray. Maya is involved in many vocal ensembles at MU, including University Singers and Show-Me Opera. Roles Maya has performed include Elsie Maynard in Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Ginevra in Handel's *Ariodante* and Princess Adélaïde in the world premiere of Felix Jarrar's *Pompadour Porcelain*. Most recently, Maya participated in the Miami Music Festival where she performed the role of Marie Antoinette in John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*. Maya also studies Indian classical music and has given several concerts in her hometown, as well as in cities across India. Additionally, Maya is also a violinist and a member of the University of Missouri Symphony Orchestra.

Erin Brage, soprano, is from Kansas City, Missouri. She is a junior at Mizzou studying Marketing (BSBA) and Vocal Performance (BM). During her studies, she has been involved in Landlocked Opera, Show-Me Opera, University Singers, staged arias, opera scenes, Canticum Novum Chamber Choir, and Ars Nova. She has been taking voice lessons from Professor Christina Ray since 2022 and Anna Mandina since 2024. Prior to college, she took lessons from Jill Hemann for six years. Erin played Phoebe Meryll in *The Yeomen of the Guard* this past April and 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 October 2024, she made it to semifinals in the Central Region NATS upper-level treble division and in April 2023, she received 2nd place in the Mid-MO NATS lower-level treble division.

Emmaline Brown is a mezzo-soprano who specializes in operatic styles, although she enjoys singing all types of music. She performs opera roles as well as musical theatre and contemporary. In fact, she placed second in the classical group at NATS in 2024 and 2025, with an honorable mention in the musical theatre category. Emmaline began singing at just five years old, being taught by her grandparents who themselves had a gospel band. This influenced her sound greatly throughout her early life, as she adapted a soulful vibrato, melismatic singing, and the ability to improvise. Emmaline comes from the small town of Pacific, Missouri, where she took weekly vocal lessons with Dr. Phil Woodmore as a homeschool student. She is currently studying under Prof. Christina Ray during her third year of undergrad, with a major in vocal performance at the

University of Missouri. She has recently accepted the role of the Witch in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, produced by the university's 'Show-Me Opera' program. Her recent roles in various operas and scenes include Carmen from *Carmen*, Auntie from *Peter Grimes*, Tisbe from *La Cenerentola*, Isabella from *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and a cover for the role of Dame Carruthers in a full production of *Yeomen of the Guard*.

Noah Carlson (Ensemble) is a second year Sport Management Major from Naperville, IL. He is excited to participate in his very first Opera Scenes with Mizzou's Show Me Opera! Noah has been involved in theatre since he was 7 years old. However, he's still navigating the uniqueness of opera. Music has always been a safe space for Noah, and continues to be a major importance in his life. Noah is hoping that all the music you hear today will touch your heart. Lastly, Noah would like to thank all his peers and teachers that have helped these scenes come to life!

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. Her most recent performances include Adina from Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* with Mediterranean Opera Company in Summer 2025, as well as Lucia (*Lucia di lamermoor*), Violetta (*La traviata*), and Marie (*La fille du régiment*) in opera scenes. Since attending Mizzou, she has participated in University Singers, the university's Bach Collegium Choir, Canticum Novum, and Show-Me Opera.

Elizabeth Dorman is thrilled to appear in her first performance with Show-Me Opera. She is a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a Bachelor of Journalism. Elizabeth is a proud member of Mizzou University Singers and Mizzou Sankofa Chorale, and she studies voice with Dr. Alexandra Schoeny. A native of Columbia, Missouri, Elizabeth has performed in various theatrical productions in the mid-Missouri area. Most recently, she played Ellie in *Freaky Friday* with Columbia Entertainment Company.

Grace Gard, Soprano, is from Lee's Summit, Missouri, and is a student at the University of Missouri studying voice with Dr. Alexandra Schoeny. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. Grace is a member of Mizzou's University Singers, Show-Me Opera, Sankofa Chorale, and Jazz Combos. Under Show-Me Opera's opera scenes programs, Ms. Gard will be singing the role of Magda in a scene from Puccini's *La Rondine*. Coming up, she will be performing as Gretel in Humperdinck's *Hansel & Gretel* with Show-Me Opera.

Hunter Garner is a first year MU student from Troy, Missouri. He is pursuing a degree in vocal music education and is studying under Professor Steven Tharp. He plays trumpet and is currently learning piano. This is his first semester in opera and is excited to continue to grow and become a better musician.

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 under Dr. Alexandra Schoeny. Most recently, Aidan performed as Dame Carruthers (*The Yeomen of the Guard*, Show-Me Opera), and as a chorus member in Landlocked Opera's production of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. He has previously served as the Assistant Music Director of GCPA's production of *Alice by Heart*, and as the Stage Manager of Show-Me Opera's Fall 2024 Scenes Production, and stage manager of the 2025 Spring Staged Arias Program at MU. Aidan will next be seen as King Kasper in Landlocked Opera's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and The Witch in Show-Me Opera's production of *Hansel and Gretel*. Aidan is a member of University Singers, conducted by Dr. Brandon Boyd. Additionally, he proudly serves as President of the Zeta chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

Josh Goldman is a Junior pursuing a BA of Music, along with Business Management. Josh studies voice under Christina Ray. Josh performed with Show Me Opera last year, where he was Leonard Meryll in *Yeoman of the Guard*, along with performing in various opera scenes and staged arias. Josh is also a member of University Singers and Mizzou Forte Acapella.

Kelsey Hale is a mezzo-soprano hailing from Saint Charles, Missouri. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and is currently studying under Dr. Alexandra Schoeny. Prior to attending Mizzou, Kelsey enjoyed performing in several school and community theatre productions and has now found her niche in Show-Me Opera. Credits include three scenes programs, chorus in Handel's *Ariodante*, and covering Phoebe Meryll in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Kelsey is excited to play the role of Sandman this spring in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*.

Diego Halbeck is a baritone originating from Maryland Heights, Missouri. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Music, studying Voice with Professor Steven Tharp, and a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. He is currently involved in Mizzou University Singers, Hitt Street Harmony, and Show-Me Opera. He was additionally involved in Show-Me Opera's Spring 2025 production, *The Yeoman of the Guard*, as the Lieutenant. Diego would like to thank his family and friends for their undying support and Professor Tharp for his mentorship and guidance.

Emma Harper is a sophomore from Lake Zurich, Illinois, working toward a dual degree in music and journalism with a French minor at the University of Missouri. She is a soprano studying voice with Dr. Alexandra Schoeny. This is Emma's second year participating in the Show-Me Opera scenes program. Previously, she has performed in *Yeomen of the Guard* and *Music from the Black Box* with the Opera Workshop. She has been involved in theatre for many years and has enjoyed exploring opera after many years in musical theatre. She is so excited to perform with such a talented cast!

Natasha Haverly is a sophomore at the University of Missouri pursuing an undergraduate Bachelor's of Music in Vocal Performance. She is a member of the University Singers, as well as Sankofa Chorale and Show-Me Choir. Previously in the opera program, she has performed the role of one of the Knaben in *Die Zauberflöte*. She is currently studying under Professor Ray, and has also previously studied under Professor Trent Rash.

Katherine "Katie" E. Jones, soprano, is from Kansas City, Missouri and is currently in her third year of pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. She studies voice under Professor Christina Ray and is a member of University Singers under the direction of Dr. Brandon Boyd. Katie recently completed her time as an Honors Discovery Fellow Scholar under the mentorship of Dr. Kari Adams, researching archetypes, cliches, and sexualizations applied to soprano and mezzo-soprano roles in opera. Katie has previously covered the role of Ginevra in Handel's *Ariodante* and the role of Elsie in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Katie travelled to Philadelphia this summer, where she competed in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) National Competition, where she competed in the top 15 performers for the Lower Collegiate Musical Theatre Category. This spring, Katie will be performing the role of Gretel in Show Me Opera's production of Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*.

Zoe Kersey is a soprano from Saint Charles, Missouri. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education, and studies under Christina Ray. She has performed in Show-Me Opera's *Yeomen of the Guard* and two previous opera scenes programs. Prior to college, Zoe studied voice and piano with Sharon Byers in her hometown of Saint Charles. Zoe has also studied dance for 13 years, and is a choreographer for MU Golden Dynamics. Her background in music and dance reflects her passion for the arts, which she aims to bring to her future career as a music educator.

Bomi Kim has performed internationally as a recitalist, chamber musician, and soloist with orchestras across Germany, Poland, Italy, South Korea, and the United States. A prizewinner of the International Competition "Don Vincenzo Vitti" in Italy and the Vomblattspielen (Sight Reading) Competition in Germany, she is an active collaborator with vocal, opera, and instrumental artists. In South Korea, she worked extensively with the Elpis Trio, Pilgrim Mission Choir, and Gimhae Municipal Choir. Ms. Kim holds degrees in Piano Performance and Music Education from Kyungpook National University, a Master of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar, and a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from the University of Missouri. Her recording *Visions*, with tenor Kyle Stegall, features work by living composers. She currently serves as Collaborative Pianist and Adjunct Instructor at Columbia College and the University of Missouri.

Kennedy Kinnick, mezzo-soprano from Raymore, Missouri, is earning her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at the University of Missouri (2026). She has won multiple NATS awards

and has performed roles including Hippolyta (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*), Polinesso (*Ariodante*), Dame Carruthers (*The Yeomen of the Guard*), and Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*). Kennedy has appeared with Mizzou Opera, Opera Seme, Landlocked Opera, and Lyric Opera Studio Weimar, and recently performed as a soloist with the Mizzou Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming performances include *The Mother (Amahl and the Night Visitors)* and *Hansel (Hansel and Gretel)*. She hopes that you enjoy opera scenes tonight!

Omolara Ogunmola is working towards a BA in Vocal Performance, studying under Professor Christina Ray, as well as a BS in Civil Engineering. Earlier this year, she graduated from Pattonville High School in Saint Louis County. As a freshman, this is her first time participating in Mizzou's opera scenes, but she has some experience from the Artists in Training program with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Omolara has been on stage for performances of several types, from playing Sarah in *Ragtime* with the Gateway Center for Performing Arts, to conducting her high school orchestra as they played her arrangement of "Aubrey" by Bread. She has also played cello in pit orchestras for *Shrek the Musical* and *Crazy for You*. Omolara is looking forward to her role as the Sandman in *Hansel and Gretel* this spring - her debut role in a full-length opera.

Zoey Roberds is from Liberty, MO, and is a sophomore at The University of Missouri, who is double majoring in Music and Psychology. Zoey is a mezzo-soprano studying under Steven Tharp. She has done theatre on and off since middle school, and this will be her third opera ensemble she has been in, though this is her first time in opera scenes at Mizzou. She has been a part of the children's chorus for a production of *La Boheme*, at the Lyric Opera in Kansas City in 2019, as well as the ensemble of *The House Without a Christmas Tree*, put on by William Jewell College, in 2022. She was a part of her high school's chamber choir and acapella group, and she is now in one of Mizzou's acapella groups, called Mizzou Forte, as well as in Mizzou's Concert Chorale, both of which she has done for two years now.

Miles Skaggs, Bass-Baritone, is a native of Salem, Missouri, where his passion for music first began. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Education at the University of Missouri, where he has been honing his craft as a vocalist and educator. Miles studies voice under the guidance of Christina Ray, whose mentorship has been instrumental in his development as a performer. As a dedicated member of Mizzou's premier choral ensemble, University Singers, directed by Dr. Brandon Boyd, Miles has had the opportunity to perform a wide range of challenging and inspiring repertoire. His love for collaboration and ensemble work has deepened through his involvement in this prestigious group. Miles recently made his operatic debut as Sir Richard Cholmondeley in Mizzou's production of *Yeomen of the Guard*.

Christopher Songco, tenor, is from St. Louis, Missouri. He is a sophomore at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Music Education with an emphasis in Vocal/Choral Music. He is also pursuing a Spanish minor. He

currently studies voice under the instruction of Professor Steven Tharp. Previously, Chris has performed as a chorus member in the Fall 2024 production of Opera Scenes, as Second Citizen in the Spring 2025 production of *Yeomen of the Guard*, and as a chorus member of the Spring 2025 Staged Arias program.

Molly Symmonds, mezzo-soprano, is from Kansas City, Missouri, and is a senior at the University of Missouri studying voice with Christina Ray. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Bachelor of Science in Business Management. Ms. Symmonds is a member of Mizzou's University Singers, Show-Me Opera, Mizzou SNATS and Canticum Novum. Most recently, she performed the role of Phoebe in Show-Me Opera's production of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Under Show-Me Opera's opera scenes programs, Ms. Symmonds has prepared select songs from the roles of Cenerentola from Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Dorabella and Despina from Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. In May 2025, Molly traveled to Italy with University Singers for a performance tour through Rome, Venice, and Assisi. Coming up, she will be performing as Hansel in Humperdinck's *Hansel & Gretel* with Show-Me Opera, and Amahl in Landlocked Opera's *Amahl & The Night Visitors*.

Carter Thiemann, baritone, is from St. Charles, Missouri and is currently a junior at the University of Missouri. He is pursuing a degree in vocal performance. He studies voice with Steven Tharp, is a member of the Show Me Opera under the direction of Steven Tharp, and sings with the University Singers under the direction of Brandon Boyd. He has performed the roles Corny Collins in *Hairspray*, Herald in *The Boar's Head*, Professor Callahan in *Legally Blonde*, Rè di Scozia in *Ariodante*, and Jack Point in *Yeoman of the Guard*. Carter is also an accomplished pianist that plays professionally around Columbia. He has played for competitions, recitals, choirs, and is currently serving as the YAP pianist for Landlocked Opera.

Pianist **Jinhong Yoo**, from South Korea, is currently pursuing dual master's degrees in Piano Performance and Collaborative Piano at the University of Missouri, where he studies under full assistantship as a Graduate Assistant and recipient of the Ella Ferguson Turner Piano Scholarship. He has performed Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 3* with orchestra in Italy after winning the International Concerto Competition. In Seoul, he performed in recital collaborations with fellow musicians, including a Duo Concert at the IBK Chamber Hall of the Seoul Arts Center and a recital at the Korea National University of Arts. Recognized for his expressive depth and collaborative artistry, Yoo continues to present recital performances as both a soloist and collaborative pianist, while actively engaging in chamber concerts, contemporary music projects, and opera productions.

Aaron Wucher is a Countertenor from Columbia, Missouri. He is pursuing a Bachelor's of Journalism in Strategic Communication with a minor in Music and is currently studying with Steven Tharp. Aaron enjoys listening to and performing all kinds of music. He currently is

involved in Mizzou Concert Chorale and Show-Me Opera and is thrilled about the opportunity to make music in this community. Aaron would like to thank his family and friends for their constant support and Professor Tharp for his guidance and kindness.

Rachelle Jonck is a world-renowned vocal coach, expert in bel canto, and the founding director of Bel Canto Boot Camp.

In a career spanning three continents, Rachelle has worked with singers at many of the major opera houses in Europe, the U.S., and her native South Africa. In 2024, Rachelle embarked on an extensive European coaching tour, which included a master class at Guild Hall in London, a workshop in Berlin, and coachings with singers at Stuttgart Opera, Staatstheater Nürnberg, Stadttheater Bern and Dutch National Opera. This season, she is teaching at the Wiener Volksoper, the Lunenburg Academy for Music Performance in Nova Scotia (Canada), the Glenn Gould School of Music in Toronto (Canada), and the National Association of Teachers of Singing intern program, where she will be training young collaborative pianists. In the summer, she will coach at Santa Fe Opera's Apprentice Artist program, conduct *L'elisir d'amore* for the Mediterranean Opera School and Festival in Sicily, lead Bel Canto Boot Camp's first coaching retreat in Tuscany and be a guest speaker at the Association of Teachers of Singing conference at Covent Garden in London. She returns to South Africa in August for a recording project with North-West University in Potchefstroom, *Vocal Vocabulary*, where in collaboration with students, Bel Canto Boot Camp will translate the essential vocabulary of bel canto singing into the 12 official languages of South Africa.

Trained at the University of Stellenbosch, Rachelle quickly made a name for herself in South Africa, where she started as a rehearsal pianist and vocal coach at Cape Town Opera and taught at the Opera School of the University of Cape Town. She later served as Chorus Master and Assistant Conductor at the State Theater Opera in Pretoria, founded the State Theater Philharmonic Choir, and was awarded the Nederburg Opera Prize—South Africa's highest opera award. In 1998, Rachelle moved to New York City as Head Vocal Coach and Assistant Conductor of Bel Canto at Caramoor with Will Crutchfield. Her work with the young artists of this company was featured in an article in *Early Music America*. She has since served on the faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, Westminster Choir College and The Steans Institute at Ravinia, and given masterclasses at many of the country's leading training programs, conservatories and universities.

In addition to her work as a coach, Rachelle performs regularly as both pianist and conductor. She has given recitals at the Caramoor Festival, Weill Recital Hall, and Opera America, and released an album, *Gabriel Fauré: 30 Mélodies*, with tenor Steven Tharp. Her conducting credits include *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the Spier Festival in Stellenbosch; *Così fan tutte*, Pauline Viardot's *Cendrillon*, and Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle* with Caramoor; Bizet's *Le docteur*,

Miracle at the 92nd Street Y with the Orchestra of St. Luke's; *Werther*, *Don Giovanni*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Anna Bolena* with Baltimore Concert Opera; and *La gazza ladra* from the *fortepiano* with Teatro Nuovo.

While Rachelle's studio includes professionals whose careers take them to the greatest opera houses of the world, she is also dedicated to spreading the principles of bel canto to all. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she established Bel Canto Boot Camp with longtime collaborator Derrick Goff. BCBC's signature course The Vaccai Project teaches the essential elements of bel canto singing, period notation practices, ornamentation, and classical Italian poetry and libretto form—all based on Vaccai's *Metodo di canto*. It is available world-wide on Amazon. Now a non-profit organization, BCBC breaks the often prohibitive barriers of distance, cost, and time to train and empower singers and audiences alike by making online and in-person training available to all. rachellejck.com belcantobootcamp.com

Steven Tharp, singer, teacher, director and “recordings maven” (*Opera News*) is Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Missouri. He has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, London's Royal Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic.

His operatic credits include performances with the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Netherlands Opera, Badisches Staatsooper, Teatro Massimo, Netherlands Reisopera, Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Pacific, Minnesota Opera and the companies of Dallas, Houston, Seattle, Memphis, Omaha, Salt Lake City and Miami. His roles encompass the entire range of lyric tenor repertoire, from Monteverdi to Libby Larsen.

Mr. Tharp's world-premiere recording of the complete songs of Edward MacDowell earned a Grammy Award nomination, and his recording of Frank Martin's *Le Vin Herbé* was an “Editor's Choice” in *Opera News*. Other recordings include Vaughan-Williams' *On Wenlock Edge*, Handel's *Messiah* with the American Bach Soloists, Schubert's *Schwanengesang*, Fauré *melodies* with Rachelle Jonck, and his most recent release, Schubert's *Winterreise*, accompanied by Janice Wenger. Mr. Tharp has also directed opera for the Manhattan School of Music, Bel Canto at Caramoor and Landlocked Opera.

Program Notes

Così fan tutte

The title of the 1790 opera *Così fan tutte* roughly translates to “women are like that” and is occasionally translated as “women are fickle.” The librettist, Lorenzo De Ponte (1749-1838), originally intended the libretto for composer Antonio Salieri (1750-1825) before giving the work to Mozart. Living for only 35 years, Mozart composed this during a period of fiscal instability, but it remains one of his most performed works to this day. In this scene, we meet our four young lovers, the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella and their fiancés Guglielmo and Ferrando, in addition to the sour Don Alfonso. A man who swears women are all unfaithful, Don Alfonso challenges the two young men to a wager: pretend you’re off to war and see who remains faithful. This scene is the moment the two sisters are told their lovers are “going off to war.” Inconsolable, they sing about remaining faithful, and weep as their fiancés march away. Little do they know that their lovers will return in disguise, each pursuing the other’s fiancée. The sisters initially remain loyal to their lovers but eventually begin to succumb to rising feelings for their pursuers, finally falling in love. When the wager is revealed, it isn’t specified if the couples stay with their new lovers or go back to their original counterparts, leaving it up to the interpretation of each individual director.

Lucia di Lammermoor

One of the most famous arias in the soprano repertoire “The Mad Scene” from Gaetano Donizetti’s (1797-1848) 1835 opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, is a masterclass in coloratura and endurance. A man famed for his infatuation with English literature, Donizetti’s work is based on the Scottish novel, “The Bride of Lammermoor” by Sir Walter Scott, and contains libretto written by Salvatore Cammarano (1801-1852). The opera follows the Ashtons and Ravenswoods, two families who have been feuding over an estate for generations. However, the feud threatens to resolve as Lucia Ashton and Edgardo Ravenswood begin a secret romance. The penultimate scene in the opera, this scene follows Lucia’s unwilling marriage to the rich Arturo, forced upon her by her brother, Enrico, to save her family from financial ruin and additionally prevent her from marrying one of Enrico’s sworn enemies. Lucia, believing Edgardo to have abandoned her, signs her marriage contract. A disastrous wedding, with Edgardo suddenly appearing and cursing Lucia, leaves her heartbroken and clinging to sanity. Later, in her wedding chamber, she murders her new husband. Directed by master’s student Connor Stratton, this scene follows Lucia as she slowly descends into madness, imagining what her life with Edgardo might have been.

Falstaff

Falstaff was first performed in 1893. Composed by Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) with libretti by Arrigo Boito (1842-1918), the opera derives its storyline from Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV, Parts I and II*. In the opera, Sir John Falstaff, a fat, roguish knight and prolific womanizer, is in need of some cash. He decides his best means to get this cash is from two married ladies in Windsor, Alice Ford and Meg Page. He sends them two identical love letters to try and weasel his way into fortune. In this scene, Alice, Meg, Mistress Quickly, and Alice's daughter Nanetta, all prolific gossips, find out about these identical letters, and immediately begin scheming at how to make Falstaff pay. Storming into the gardens, Alice's husband Ford hears about the knight's intentions with his wife from Falstaff's henchman Pistola and Bardolfo, and he is fuming. Along with Dr. Caius and Fenton, they rave about Falstaff's evil intentions and how they plan to thwart them. In between both parties' fits of rage, however, romance blooms. Nanetta, though promised to Caius, has been meeting in secret with Fenton behind her parents' back. They playfully flirt throughout the scene, Fenton proclaiming his love despite the risk of parental disapproval. An opera known for its complex imagery and poetry, the libretto is partially drawn from the poetry of Boccaccio, including the duets between Fenton and Nanetta found in this scene.

La rondine

Giacomo Puccini's (1858-1924) *La rondine* or "The Swallow," was first performed in 1917, with libretto written by Giuseppe Adami (1878-1946). Puccini's variation on *La traviata*, the opera follows Paris courtesan Magda as she navigates love and status quo. Beginning the opera as mistress to the wealthy Rambaldo, Magda listens to her friend Prunier, who is desperately in love with Magda's maid Lisette, announce that romantic partnerships are back in fashion. A poet, Prunier reads his friend's palm and determines she will find love. It is then that he introduces Ruggero, a young man who is new to the Paris scene and recommends him to the restaurant Bullier's for the evening. Magda decides to disguise herself as a poor girl and sneak out to meet the younger man. When she finally meets Ruggero, she introduces herself as Paulette instead of Magda, and they proceed to fall deeply in love. This scene begins when the couple is discovered by a lovestruck Prunier and an intoxicated Lisette, who Prunier desperately tries to convince that Paulette isn't her mistress, Magda. From this scene blossoms a love story of two couples, before being rudely interrupted by Rambaldo. Hiding Lisette and Ruggero, Magda explains to Rambaldo that her mind is made up and she will choose love. Despite their deep adoration of each other, the opera eventually ends with Magda ultimately leaving Ruggero, claiming that she cannot bring herself to ruin his reputation.