TWILIGHT: GODS
OCTOBER 17, 18, 20, 21, 2020

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE
Yuval Sharon, Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director
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When Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) founder Dr. David DiChiera retired from his role as Artistic Director in 2017, we knew that the organization needed to identify a successor. To this end, it was critical that we find someone who would acknowledge not only the vision that led to the creation of this organization some 50 years ago, but also its continued evolution from that time through the present.

On September 9, 2020, we announced the appointment of one of the most internationally celebrated directors of our time, Yuval Sharon, as the artistic director of MOT. The announcement coincided with the creation of the Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director position.

Yuval is one of the most in-demand and innovative names in opera today. He is widely known for signature site-specific works for which his Los Angeles company, The Industry, is renowned.

Although the current pandemic has been devastating for theaters everywhere, Yuval’s appointment arrives at an opportune time to explore the bounds of opera, both within the Detroit Opera House and outside of traditional venues. Through Twilight: Gods, MOT seeks to further our evolution as an opera company known for forward-thinking performances and a distinctly Detroit perspective.

As we embark on our 50th anniversary under Yuval Sharon’s artistic leadership, we are buoyed by the opportunity of what the future of opera in Detroit can mean.

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We hope you enjoy this performance of Twilight: Gods.

Please follow all traffic instructions during the performance and do not exit your vehicle. Emergency exits are available on each level of the parking structure.

Michigan Opera Theatre is not responsible for any injury or property damage due to the driving or braking of vehicles during this performance.

By entering the Parking Center you voluntarily accept and assume all of the risks and hazards of participating in any and all activities associated with this production of Twilight: Gods.
Today, you are among the first to experience *Twilight: Gods*, a first-of-its-kind work conceived and directed by Yuval. Thank you for joining us for this unique performance as we launch the next act of opera in Detroit under the auspices of MOT. We look forward to seeing you again both within the Detroit Opera House and beyond!

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Richard Wagner in 1871, five years before premiering the *Ring* cycle.

The influence of Richard Wagner (1813-1883) is evident in the tone poems of Richard Strauss and the film scores of John Williams, and spreads beyond composition into philosophy, literature, the visual arts, theater and film. Wagner’s poetic lines are scattered throughout James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the bard of the American prairie Willa Cather’s *The Song of the Lark*, the architecture of Louis Sullivan, the drawings of Arthur Rackham and Jean Delville, and some pretty memorable cinematic moments, including those in Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*. Friedrich Nietzsche described Wagner as “a volcanic eruption of the total undivided artistic capacity of nature itself,” and Thomas Mann hailed him as “probably the greatest talent in the entire history of art.” His four-opera *Ring* cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen*—of which *Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods)* is the finale—stands as one of the hallmarks of 19th-century art.

We often refer to the “lives” of Wagner, not merely to indicate the many hats he wore, but also the variety with which he and others told his story. He was a prodigious “re-worker” of his own life’s tale. His second wife Cosima (the daughter of Franz
Liszt) journaled daily during the last quarter of his life, capturing the composer's every move and thought, although her journals regularly include annotations in Wagner's own hand. It is fitting, then, that a question mark hovers over the identity of the father of the composer whose works resonate with themes of parental anxiety. His "official" father was the police actuary Carl Friedrich Wagner, but the boy's adoptive father, the actor-painter Ludwig Geyer (who adopted the child on Carl Friedrich's death in November 1813, when Wagner was just six months old), may possibly have been his real father. Geyer's status in Leipzig's theater scene would leave an indelible mark on the young boy, and his childlike mixture of determination and cunning would not dim throughout Wagner's life.

Wagner received only a small amount of formal education in music and composition, learning largely on the job. At the age of 19, he began a series of seasonal engagements conducting at various minor theaters, giving him the opportunity to craft a first operatic attempt, *Die Feen*, in 1834. But on these positions alone he could not support the comfortable lifestyle he craved. Escaping his creditors, he spent two impoverished yet formative years in Paris, then the center of the operatic world. Wagner was received by the composer Giacomo Meyerbeer—the father of French *grand opéra* and a whole new school of operatic thought—who provided Wagner essential letters of introduction to the Dresden Court Opera. It was there in 1842 that *Rienzi* was premiered, followed shortly thereafter by *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser*. By then, the impressions of his travelling years had solidified into dogma: what he saw was that the Italian and French-dominated operatic genre lacked a solid German counterpart.

In the early months of 1848, Wagner was busy finishing *Lohengrin*. The world outside his studio, however, was on fire. The February Revolution in Paris spilled into the streets, ending the constitutional monarchy and establishing the French Second Republic. Spurred by their francophone compatriots, the March Revolutions across the 39 independent states of the German Confederation secured (at least for a time) the first freely-elected parliament for all of Germany. As soon as Wagner set down the final effervescent A major chord of *Lohengrin*, he marched into the streets—with both his feet and pen.

Wagner's wanted notice in Eberhardt's General Police Gazette more than four years after he fled Germany.

Wagner was introduced to utopian-socialist ideas and supported the democratically-led republican movement. He believed the revolution would bring about a thorough democratization and renewal of society, yield a unified German nation-state, and enact basic reforms in the sphere of culture and the arts. His support of the provisional government and participation in the information service of the Dresden insurgents, however, forced Wagner to flee a warrant for his arrest, and he would live in exile in Switzerland for a decade.

Under the influence of the revolution in 1848, Wagner conceived of the fable that he later set as his music festival *The Ring of the Nibelungen*, the intellectual content of which was based on the concepts of “true socialism” and dealt with the struggle of humanity against the rule of gold. Wagner was not the first to use the term *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or “total work of art,” nor did he use it consistently. Nevertheless, what this meant for Wagner was a new type of opera, a rebirth of the art form. Coming out
of his revolutionary years, his aesthetic goals were, from the beginning, shot through with nationalist zeal, which verged on the pseudo-messianic and xenophobic. His vision for the artwork of the future was intended to establish opera—or “music drama” by this time, distancing himself from his predecessors—in a radically recast form, as at once the instrument and the product of a reconstructed society.

Wagner believed that a corrupt industrial society could only be reformed by educating and reconnecting the people with their ideal natural state. By marrying together again music, drama, poetry, painting and more, the total work of the Ring could absorb its spectators, transporting them to a different reality. Telling the story of civilization, its beginning and end, the Ring is about nature and ambition in conflict, and a “primordial equilibrium,” as Roger Scrutton writes, that can only be recovered “if our human dominion were relinquished.” Overcoming the will of power demands sacrifice of a kind that only love can accomplish. That is what the Valkyrie Brünnhilde—who has, through compassion, fallen into the human world and fallen in love with Siegfried—finally accomplishes through her self-sacrifice, rearranging the world and atoning for its sins.

Whether her death returns us to the natural order or whether that order is even desirable are questions the Ring does not answer. Wagner believed that modern people, having wavering faith in the divine order, need another route to meaning, to spiritual and moral fulfillment. He turned to music drama, and in particular the Ring, as a vision of the ideal achieved with no help from the gods of Valhalla—a total work of art that can, in the proper context, express our deepest mortal longings.

Wagner was a revolutionary, active on the barricades, with his pen in journalism and polemics, and through his endless melodies and vision for an artwork of the future. But he was also largely a synthesizer. Many of his ideas were not necessarily novel; they just had disparate origins, and Wagner brought them together. His life—or lives—could be defined by any number of -isms: democratic-republicanism, nationalism, nativism, illusionism, realism, dilettantism, chauvinism, antisemitism . . . Wagnerism. He was friends with kings and an enemy of bureaucrats. He was one-time friends and then longer-time enemies with Nietzsche, vacillated between adulation of Arthur Schopenhauer and Constantin Frantz, memorialized neo-pagan Christian traditions and read widely on Buddhism. He was discussed by Karl Marx, John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy, and inspired Hugo Wolf, Anton Bruckner, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Edvard Grieg and Camille Saint-Saëns—all of whom were among the first Ring audiences. He was a fallible individual whose influence is still felt in the art and culture we regularly encounter today.
TWILIGHT: GODS

Adapted from Richard Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods)
World Premiere - Detroit Opera House Parking Center,
Detroit, Michigan - October 17, 2020
Co-Commissioned by Michigan Opera Theatre and Lyric Opera of Chicago

MUSIC AND LIBRETTO
Richard Wagner

ORIGINAL POETRY AND NARRATIVE
Marsha Music

ORCHESTRA ARRANGEMENT
Edward Windels

RECORDED AUDIO AND “FUNERAL MARCH”
ARRANGED AND PERFORMED BY
Lewis Pesacov

ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Yuval Sharon

CONCEPT AND STAGE DIRECTION
Yuval Sharon

SCENIC, LIGHTING AND PROJECTION DESIGN
Jason H. Thompson and Kaitlyn Pietras

SOUND DESIGN
Mark Grey

COSTUME COORDINATION
Suzanne M. Hanna, Michigan Opera Theatre
Scott Marr, Lyric Opera of Chicago

MUSIC ADVISOR
William Billingham

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Alexander Gedeon

ASSOCIATE PRODUCTION DESIGNER
Francois-Pierre Couture

SOUND ENGINEER
Stephanie Farina

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
Samantha Greene

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION CREDITS
Premiere performances in Detroit and Chicago collaboratively produced by Michigan Opera Theatre and Lyric Opera of Chicago. This production features select costume pieces designed by Marie-Jeane Lecca and select scenic elements designed by Robert Innes Hopkins from Lyric Opera’s Ring Cycle.

Additional scenic elements constructed by West End Studios of Detroit. Lighting and projection equipment furnished by PXT Studio of Los Angeles, with additional lighting equipment provided by Fantasee Lighting, Detroit. Audio and transmitter systems provided by Thunder Audio Inc. of Detroit.
CAST
(in order of appearance)

Catherine Martin....................... WALTRAUTE
Morris Robinson....................... HAGEN
Donnie Ray Albert...................... ALBERICH
Avery Boettcher......................... WOGLINDE
Olivia Johnson......................... WELLGUNDE
Kaswanna Kanyinda................. FLOSSHILDE
Sean Panikkar.......................... SIEGFRIED
Marsha Music............................ ERDA
Christine Goerke....................... BRÜNNHILDE
PROLOGUE
Erda, Mother Earth, introduces us to the story of a golden ring that gives eternal power to whoever possesses it. For generations, gods, giants, and dwarves have fought for possession of the ring, and many have died in their power-hungry pursuit. Brünnhilde, Erda’s daughter with the chief god Wotan, is the one destined to bring about the end of this struggle – although at the beginning of this story, she is simply a woman in love with the hero, Siegfried. As a token of his love, Siegfried gives Brünnhilde the ring, unaware of its corrupting influence.

SCENE 1: WALTRAUTE’S STORY
The ring was made from gold stolen from the depths of the river. The chief god Wotan, who desires omniscient power above everything else, is so desperate to possess the ring, he has created Siegfried as a warrior to claim it. But disillusioned from generations of violence, Wotan now believes all his plans are vain illusion. He wastes away on his throne, awaiting his death and the destruction of his empire. Brünnhilde’s sister Waltraute reports to her sister on the sad state of their father.

SCENE 2: GENERATIONS OF HATRED
Wotan’s chief rival is Alberich, a small-minded man obsessed with claiming the ring for himself. Like Wotan, he too has fathered a son to serve as his warrior in the battle for the ring: the bitter, loveless Hagen. As Hagen sleeps, his father comes to him in dreams to ensure his son stays the course.

SCENE 3: SIEGFRIED’S DEATH
The only hope for humanity is for the ring to be restored to nature: back in the river, where it was first stolen. The Rheinmaidens, the three sisters of the river who were meant to protect the gold, appear to Siegfried as a premonition of his death. Hagen stabs Siegfried in the back, and he sings a dying hymn of love to the true hero of this story: Brünnhilde.

SCENE 4: SIEGFRIED’S FUNERAL MARCH

SCENE 5: BRÜNNHILDE’S IMMOLATION
Brünnhilde claims the ring from Siegfried’s corpse. She mounts her horse and prepares to ride into Siegfried’s funeral pyre, an act that precipitates the return of the ring to the Rheinmaidens and the fire to incinerate her father Wotan’s palace. The gods and the corrupt world they have created are burned to the ground, with the hope that a new, better world will arise.

What else happens in Wagner’s full opera?
Visit the TWILIGHT: GODS page at https://michiganopera.org/season-schedule/twilight-gods/ to hear Marsha Music’s re-telling of the tale.
GRANE’S TRANSFORMATION:
Wagner’s Noble Horse Gets a Detroit Makeover

Erica Hobbs and Andrea Scobie

While a seemingly minor character, Wagner’s noble horse Grane has a big role to play in his *Ring* cycle. As the loyal steed of heroine Brünnhilde, Grane transports her throughout her journey, from battlefields to Valhalla, the dwelling of the gods, to Midgard (Earth) and beyond. When she must part with her lover Siegfried, she gifts him Grane as a token of her love.

Grane’s big moment, however, is at the climax of *Twilight: Gods*—the end of the entire *Ring* cycle—when he takes Brünnhilde on to their final destination into the flames of the funeral pyre of her newly-slain beloved. With this act, Brünnhilde destroys Valhalla and the gods once and for all and restores peace to the world.

In traditional productions, Grane is portrayed by live horses, a delightful surprise to the audience. Wagner’s original 1876 production at Bayreuth featured the black stallion Cocotte, a prized equine loaned for the purpose of playing Grane by King Ludwig II of Bavaria. But *Twilight: Gods* within the Detroit Opera House Parking Center is anything but traditional. In a uniquely Detroit twist, Brünnhilde rides to the end in style—in a Ford Mustang. In fact, this modern “steed” is Ford’s 10 millionth Mustang, an ode to the company’s storied past and an example of Ford Motor Company Fund’s long-term support of Michigan Opera Theatre.

True Detroit horsepower meets the power of music drama in this one-of-a-kind finale only possible in the Motor City!
THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE THE PARKING CENTER?
Moving Beyond the Opera House in 21st-Century American Opera

Megan Steigerwald Ille, PhD

Opera is a messy genre. The many elements that make up an operatic production—voice, orchestra, staging, scenery, narrative—surge up against one another, sometimes aligning, and sometimes taking center stage in turn. This is one of the reasons operatic performance can be both overwhelming and exciting—the whole is often exceeded by a mass of parts that diverge and converge as the performance takes place.

A seldom-mentioned aspect of operatic performance is the opera house itself. This operatic convention represents far more than just the building that contains the messiness: the opera house concretizes particular relationships between sight and sound. Spectating within a traditional theater, such as the Detroit Opera House with its proscenium arch separating viewers from performers, requires staging, singing and listening that prioritize the needs of audience members observing the performance variously from the front and sides of the stage. The production must consider those audience members seated in the furthest balconies and those in the first rows of the orchestra. By contrast, performances in non-traditional spaces offer different and often more proximate ways of listening and watching.

When an opera is created for a space beyond the walls of the traditional opera house—in, say, a parking garage—the other elements of the genre, including the spectator, appear in novel relation to one another. Instead of seeing the staging in front of you, you might be surrounded by performers who make you feel as though you are a part of the story. Rather than listening to an acoustic performance in a grand hall, you might turn on your car radio and employ listening practices that echo your pre-COVID-19 morning commute. You may be asked to stand close enough to a baritone that you see his rib cage expand and contract as he breathes between phrases, or, as you imagine the heat of the dragon Fafnir’s breath, you might instead notice the cool breeze of a fall day.

Performances that take place beyond the walls of the opera house frequently upend the traditional hierarchies of operatic spectatorship and point to reinterpretations of the genre as a whole. New modes of performance offer the opportunity to rethink what it means to access and engage with the operatic genre and indeed, to reckon with its complex history.

While these new modes of performance have long been a part of fringe operatic production in Europe, it has only been in the past 10 to 15 years that these approaches have proliferated across the United States and Canada. Companies such as the Toronto-based Against the Grain Theatre, NYC-based companies On Site Opera and presenter Beth Morrison Projects, and L.A.-based experimental opera company The Industry have expanded the narratives, voices, and sounds that have traditionally been excluded from certain operatic spaces. Utilizing techniques first popularized by immersive theatrical companies such as Punchdrunk and Third Rail Productions, these companies have presented a range of experimental and canonic works alike. From Against the Grain’s re-imagination of Mozart’s Cosi fan tutte as A Little Too Cozy, performed at the CBS Studio in 2015, to Beth Morrison Projects’ black-box production of Ted Hearne’s The Source, to On Site Opera’s one-on-one pandemic telephone performances, United States and Canadian opera has moved beyond the walls of the opera house in myriad ways and to great effect.

Alternative modes of production also frequently allow up-and-coming, often younger composers, performers and directors to more easily access venues and audiences. By moving out of the opera house, emerging professionals are able to experiment with new ways of presenting sound and narrative. In so doing, these musicians are frequently responding to what they see as stultifying performance practices and repertories.

The productions of The Industry, an experimental opera company founded by Yuval Sharon, the newly-appointed artistic director of Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT), are particularly
important in the history of alternative operatic productions in the United States. Founded in 2012, The Industry is an “independent, artist-driven company creating experimental productions that expand the definition of opera.” Part of the reason The Industry’s productions are distinctive is because of the way they capitalize on the unique spectatorial possibilities of the operatic genre. In other words, these productions use the “messiness” of opera as a means of challenging how audiences encounter the genre as a whole.

While the company’s 2013 production of composer Christopher Cerrone’s Invisible Cities was performed in L.A.’s Union Station, this was hardly the most unique component of the performance. Audience members were given wireless headphones to hear the opera while they wandered the space of the performance, listening to and locating the performers as the opera progressed. The company’s 2015 production of Hopscotch took place in limousines in which small groups of spectators viewed the opera, while others viewed the performance from the Central Hub, a gathering space specially constructed for the opera. At the Central Hub, segments of each part of the opera were played again and again as limousine-based audience members livestreamed each scene from various L.A. locations.

Central Hub audience members take in the livestreamed versions of Hopscotch. Photo by Josh Lipton for The Industry.

The company’s 2020 production, Sweet Land, used the lens of spectatorship itself as a way of confronting historical revisionism and the violent legacy of colonality. Sweet Land was created by a prize-winning team of composers, performance and installation artists, and poets, and co-directed by Sharon and interdisciplinary artist Cannupa Hanska Luger. This collaboration demonstrated the necessity—among other things—of foregrounding a multiplicity of voices and experiences in “re-presenting” a historically white performance genre.

Performer Micah Angelo Luna as Speck in the final scene of Sweet Land at the L.A. State Historic Park. Photo by Casey Kringlen for The Industry.

The new modes of production described here also offer a dramatic way of engaging with traditional “in-house” operatic performance. In other words, removing opera from the opera house gives traditional institutions the opportunity to rethink other institutionalized components of the genre. Companies such as Opera Philadelphia, Opera Omaha, the Canadian Opera Company, the San Francisco Opera, and now, most dramatically, MOT, have drawn on techniques from the experimental opera playbook to rethink their relationship with their communities and the genre of opera itself. Of course, I’m wary of suggesting that alternate modes of performance are a cure-all to some of the problems inherent in opera. These works can reproduce some of the hierarchies and inequalities of the genre that take
place in the house, and crucially, all companies must be aware of the types of spaces into which these performances are brought. Opera is not an innocent ambassador; it is an art form with a complex history. Likewise, I am not proposing that these experimental production strategies replace traditional forms of presentation or repertories entirely. Opera in and out of the opera house constitutes a genre in dialogue with itself; we need both forms, and those forms that have yet to be imagined.

What to call these emerging forms of operatic performance? In the six years I have been researching and writing about opera sans house I have considered many terms: “Indie Opera,” The Industry’s “experimental opera,” the forms of “site-specific opera” that regional opera companies across the United States have incorporated into their seasons, and even “Alt-Op,” as a way of expressing alternate systems enabled by a keystroke. For now, though, influenced by Sharon’s own approach, I’ve settled on opera. This is, in fact, what is so fascinating about the direction that MOT has taken in hiring Sharon. Twilight: Gods is not just opera for the COVID-19 era; it is an acknowledgment of the ways operatic performance both in and out of the house will constitute the genre for the future. By recognizing what MOT is doing as opera, not opera by another name, we remind ourselves that opera has, in fact, long been a genre in dialogue with itself. We are just spectators in the house—and the parking garage.

Megan Steigerwald Ille is an Assistant Professor of Musicology, Educator, at the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati. Her research on the 21st-century U.S.-American opera industry considers the intersections of operatic, popular and digital cultures. She has articles forthcoming in the Journal of the Society for American Music and The Opera Quarterly. Her monograph-in-progress, Opera for Everyone: Experimenting with American Opera in the Digital Age, is an ethnographic study of the experimental opera company, The Industry.

**ARTIST PROFILES**

*IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER*

**DONNIE RAY ALBERT (ALBERICH)**
(Sponsored by Barbara & Michael Kratchman)

Donnie Ray Albert is a regular guest of opera companies and symphony orchestras around the world. In recent seasons, he has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opera Pacific, Houston Grand Opera, Florentine Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Dallas Opera, Arizona, Austin Lyric, Pittsburgh Opera and Atlanta Opera. Overseas he has performed in Germany at the Cologne Opera; in Great Britain at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; in Belgium at the Royal Opera; in the Czech Republic at the National Theater and in Japan with the New National Theater in Tokyo. He has also performed in Sao Paolo, Brazil and Vienna, Austria.

As a concert artist, Mr. Albert has sung with the orchestras of Washington DC (National), Köln, Southwest Florida, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Jerusalem, Seattle, Minnesota, St. Paul, Los Angeles, Palm Beach, Greensboro, Grant Park Music Festival and Madison, Vienna and Linz, Austria. He is also a resident artist with the Center for Black Music Research at Chicago’s Columbia College.
WILLIAM BILLINGHAM (MUSICAL ADVISOR)

Pianist William Billingham has served as an Assistant Conductor for Lyric Opera of Chicago since 1995. Active as a recital accompanist and chamber musician, Dr. Billingham holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory, Peabody Conservatory and University of Southern California, where he studied accompanying with Gwendolyn Koldofsky and Brooks Smith. He started his opera career in Germany, spending five years as a repetiteur in the opera houses of Heidelberg and Düsseldorf. He has also been a pianist/coach for the Aspen Music Festival and School, Cleveland Orchestra, Florentine Opera (Milwaukee, WI), Los Angeles Opera, Midsummer’s Music Festival (Door County, WI) and Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Ryan Opera Center.

avery boettcher (woGLINDE)
(Sponsored by Elizabeth & James Ciroli)

Avery Boettcher is the resident soprano of the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. She has performed a wide array of roles both in the United States and abroad, ranging from Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro with La Musica Lirica in Italy, to the lighter operetta and musical theater roles of YumYum in The Mikado with Viterbo University. She recently performed Lauretta in MOT’s production of Gianni Schicchi/Buoso’s Ghost in March as well as Zerlina in MOT’s Don Giovanni last fall. Previous roles also include the Countess in The Marriage of Figaro at the Aspen Music Festival, Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni at Indiana University Opera Theater and Zweite Dame in The Magic Flute with the Indianapolis City Orchestra. Prior to MOT, Boettcher was an opera fellow in the Aspen Music Festival where she performed John Harbison’s “Mirabai Songs” with the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, as well as Mahler’s “Symphony No. 4” with the Aspen Conductors Orchestra.

christine goerke (brünnhilde)
(Sponsored by Elaine Fontana)

Soprano Christine Goerke has appeared in many of the most prestigious opera houses of the world including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Royal Opera House, Paris Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro Real in Madrid and the Saito Kinen Festival. She has sung much of the great soprano repertoire, beginning with the Mozart and Handel heroines and now moving into dramatic Strauss and Wagner roles.

Ms. Goerke has also appeared with a number of leading orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Radio Vara, the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms and both the Hallé Orchestra and the Royal Scottish National Symphony at the Edinburgh International Festival.

Ms. Goerke is the recipient of the 2001 Richard Tucker Award, the 2015 Musical America Vocalist of the Year Award and the 2017 Opera News Award.
KASWANNA KANYINDA (FLOSSHILDE)

Mezzo-soprano, Kaswanna Kanyinda, has been praised for her dramatic presence, vocal warmth and as a “talent to keep a sharp lookout for.” Prior to the pandemic, Ms. Kanyinda finished an active season with Opera MODO with lead roles in their productions of *La Gioconda* and *Dialogue of the Carmelites*. Last season, she won a Wilde Award for her performance as the Mother in Opera MODO’s 2019 production of *The Consul*. Prior to that, Ms. Kanyinda joined Pittsburgh Festival Opera as a member of their 2018 Mastersingers Program, won the Opera Guild of Charlotte competition in 2017 and earned her masters’ degree in 2016 from the University of Michigan, under the tutelage of George Shirley. There she was featured in the workshop premiere of Bright Sheng’s *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, and was honored to represent Michigan in performance at the Kennedy Center. As an undergraduate at UNC Chapel Hill, she was cast in *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Highway #1 USA* and *Gianni Schicchi*.

CATHERINE MARTIN (WALTRAUTE)

(Sponsored by Mona & Matthew Simoncini)

Praised by The Washington Post for her “gorgeous, warm voice that you want to keep listening to,” American mezzo-soprano Catherine Martin continues to make an impact in repertoire ranging from Verdi and Wagner to Strauss and Bellini. She recently performed as Wellgunde in *Götterdämmerung* with the National Taichung Theatre in Taiwan. Her 2018-2019 season included Wowkle in *La fanciulla del West* with Maryland Lyric Opera, Tamara in *Enemies, A Love Story* with Kentucky Opera, Eva Crowley in *An American Dream* with...
SEAN PANIKKAR (SIEGFRIED)
(Sponsored by Joanne Danto & Arnold Weingarden)

Sean Panikkar continues “to position himself as one of the stars of his generation... His voice is unassailable—firm, sturdy and clear, and he employs it with maximum dramatic versatility” (Opera News). Highly prized as an interpreter of contemporary music on leading international stages, Mr. Panikkar created the roles of Adam in CO2 for a debut at Teatro alla Scala, Wendell Smith in The Summer King in a co-production by Pittsburgh Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, Agent Henry Rathbone in a co-production of JFK at the Fort Worth Opera and Opéra de Montréal, and he garnered passionate acclaim in the title role of Jack Perla's Shalimar the Clown for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Numerous engagements with the Metropolitan Opera include the company premiere of The Death of Klinghoffer, a new production of Guillaume Tell, Roméo et Juliette, Manon Lescaut, Lucia di Lammermoor and Ariadne auf Naxos.

MARSHA MUSIC (ERDA)
(Sponsored by Gretchen & Ethan Davidson)

Marsha Music, daughter of pre-Motown record producer Joe Von Battle, and West Side beauty Shirley Battle, grew up in Highland Park, and spent much time in her father's Detroit record shops. She has lived in these two cities all of her life.

She is a self-described “primordial Detroiter” and “Detroïst,” and writes about the city's music, and its past, present and future. She is a former activist/labor leader and a noted speaker and storyteller. Her writings on Detroit are published in important anthologies and periodicals, and she was the recipient of the prestigious Kresge Literary Arts Fellowship in 2012.

Ms. Music has contributed to significant Detroit narratives, including documentary films on HBO, PBS, and The History Channel. She was a Knight Arts Challenge awardee in 2015. Ms. Music has read her poetry with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, in “Symphony In D,” and has performed her one-woman shows on premier Detroit stages. She is the author of the recent book, The Detroitist.
KAITLYN PIETRAS AND JASON H. THOMPSON (SCENIC, LIGHTING, AND PROJECTION DESIGNERS)

Kaitlyn Pietras and Jason H. Thompson are husband and wife Projection Designers living in Los Angeles. Together they share over 20 years of industry experience covering a wide variety of industries with their craft including: theatre, opera, dance, museums, theme parks, corporate, and interactive environments.

They’ve designed for major companies and theaters all over the US including: The Industry, Walt Disney Creative Entertainment, Center Theatre Group, LA Philharmonic, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, New World Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, The Public Theatre, Broadway, The Guthrie Theatre, Kansas City Rep, South Coast Rep, The Geffen Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, Artists Repertory Theatre, Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, and Ars Nova. Collectively they have won two Los Angeles Ovation Awards, three LADCC awards, as well as having work showcased at the Prague Quadrennial in 2019, 2015, and 2011.

MORRIS ROBINSON (HAGEN)
(Sponsored by Karen & R. Jamison Williams)

Morris Robinson has gained a reputation as one of the most interesting and sought after basses of his generation. A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, Mr. Robinson made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 2002 in their production of Fidelio. He has since appeared there as Sarastro in Die Zauberflöte, Ferrando in Il Trovatore, and in productions of Aida, Nabucco, Tannhäuser, Les Troyens and Salome. He has also appeared at the San Francisco Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Atlanta Opera, Washington National Opera, Dallas Opera, and in Europe at the Teatro alla Scala and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. His many roles include Osmin in Die Entführung aus dem Serail, Ramfis in Aida, Sparafucile in Rigoletto, Commendatore in Don Giovanni, Grand Inquisitor in Don Carlos, Timur in Turandot, Fasolt in Das Rheingold, Joe in Show Boat and the title role in Porgy and Bess.
EDWARD WINDELS
(ORCHESTRATOR/ARRANGER)

From a very early age Edward Windels has had a wide-ranging interest in the performing arts - puppetry, ballet, theater, animation, all of these fascinated.

He didn't come to composition till the relatively late period of his mid-teens. His compositions seek to synthesize his admiration for the extended techniques and abstract tropes of contemporary new music, the long form narrative journeys of pre-20th century classical music, the kinesis of the dance music of his youth and the readily apprehensible structures of music theater.

A long-time advocate of respect for artists not supporting themselves solely through their art, he devotes his creative energies to both his own concert music compositions and a burgeoning demand as a theatrical orchestrator.

Mr. Windels graduated from the Mannes College of Music in 1990 with a master's degree in composition and theory. He has been the recipient of a fellowship at the Aspen Summer Music Festival, as well as a Meet The Composer grant, and a showcase concert devoted to his works in February, 2010 by NewMusicNewYork.

YUVAL SHARON (DIRECTOR)
(Sponsored by Gary L. Wasserman & Charles A. Kashner)

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 newly appointed Gary L. Wasserman Artistic Director of Michigan Opera Theatre.

With The Industry, Mr. 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 2016-2019, Mr. 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, Mr. 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.
ORCHESTRA

SCENE 1
JINHYUN KIM - Solo Cello

SCENE 2
J. WILLIAM KING* - Bass Clarinet
JOHN STERBENZ - Accordion
JAMES SIMONSON - Electric Bass Guitar

SCENE 4
CARRIE BANFIELD-TAPLIN* - Violin
MAURICE DRAUGHN - Harp
JOHN DORSEY* Principal - Marimba
DAVID TAYLOR - Vibraphone
KEITH CLAEYS - Vibraphone (10/21 only)

SCENE 6
ELIOT HEATON** Concertmaster - Violin
LAURA LARSON* - Flute
BRIAN BOWMAN* Principal - Clarinet
DAVID AMMER* Principal - Trumpet
BRITTANY LASCH* Principal - Trombone
JOHN MADISON* Principal - Viola
ANDREA YUN* - Cello
DEREK WELLER* Principal - Doublebass
MICHAEL SHERMAN - Keyboard

*Eliot Heaton is sponsored by
Kevin Dennis & Jeremy Zeltzer and
Richard Sonenklar & Gregory Haynes

*Missionan Opera Theatre Core Orchestra
Detroit Federation of Musicians Local #5
American Federation of Musicians

GUIDES

Biba Bell
Amanda Benjey
Anna Maria Bethune
Eric Blovits
Miranda Cole
Taylor Craft
X. Alexander Durden
Tommy Favorite
Jenna Gelusa
Kayla Gonzalez
Adam Gruber
Emily Hooper
Reilly Kerrigan
Morgan Listenbee

Julia Luterman
Joey Mattar
Lisa McCabe
Kat McNerney
Rachel Meloche
Freda Monroe
Jessica Mossner
Emma Orr
Alexis Rose
Samantha Stafford
Ann Stein
Kylie Stone
Cheryl Turkis
Katy Tye

SUPERNUMERARIES
Branden CS Hood - Hagen Double
Kirk Hayhurst - Wotan

DRIVERS
Tim Bennett, Arthur White

Special thanks to Wayne State University
for providing BFA, MFA and Faculty Artists
to participate in this production.
The Ring was not intended to be viewed just anywhere. Enjoying the patronage of Bavaria's powerful, Wagner-obsessed monarch, Ludwig II, the composer constructed a “festival theater” in the pastoral city of Bayreuth where opera enthusiasts might enjoy his Ring cycle away from cities and their smoggy, diseased air. When the Ring cycle premiered in 1876, those who wished to attend embarked on a pilgrimage that was not merely symbolic: it required visitors to reset their watches to Bayreuth's local time zone that lay outside international (or national) standards, and travel aboard open-air railway carriages that brought them into visceral, immediate contact with Germanic air. Upon reaching Bayreuth, the festival doctor, Carl Landgraf, following Wagner's orders, managed the environmental surroundings of the festival theater to maximize exposure to the country air and its restorative effects. But there was little Wagner or Landgraf needed to do to convince spectators that Bayreuth was a palliative “aerial” destination: since 1805, the city had been home to two psychiatric asylums that made use of “aerial cures” to cleanse the body and mind. Visitors' environmental experience at the festival thus re-doubled the aerial and environmental parameters at the core of Wagner's aesthetic program.

This brief tour of Wagner's atmospheric hall of mirrors might seem to reflect an idiosyncratic artistic mentality. However, it was common during the composer's lifetime for Germanic artistic thinkers to cast music as analogous to Germanic Nature. It was also common for them to meditate upon the relationship of climatic conditions to the

In the years around 1850, Richard Wagner conceived of opera in entirely new terms. He envisioned fusing every art form into what he called music drama, or the “total work of art.” In essays describing this novel form of opera, the composer used environmental, atmospheric, and climatic (relating to climate) language to describe music drama as an analogue of the Germanic climate and as an “atmospheric ring of art and nature,” his music the breath of nature. His environmental music drama, the composer suggested, is the truest form of opera, necessary for the preservation and perfection of Germanic culture. This form of drama would, he surmised, redirect bourgeois Germans' attention away from modern life towards Nature and its restorative properties, beneficial to culture and collective health.

Wagner's Ring cycle is, in part, about the devastation and destruction of the natural world and its derivative cultural artifacts at the hands of over-zealous, amoral, even capitalist actors. It offers a vision of a new world, built upon the ashes of the past. The cycle of four operas can easily be read as thematizing the composer's own aesthetic and cultural ideations. Its final installment, Götterdämmerung, could even be read as providing a warning as to what might happen to culture if Nature were forsaken in favor of the capitalist, industrialist tendencies of modern Europe. In staging these works, Wagner invented novel technological apparatuses that allowed his on-stage heroes and villains to be enveloped in atmosphere; he even envisioned “water curtains” that might allow the Ring cycle's epic river to find physical form on stage. In the course of placing the Ring narrative on stage, Wagner also gave physical form to his climatic concept of music drama.
culture and art of people living under them. They even believed that cultural hierarchies were dictated by climatic conditions. Wagner, however, pressed these contemporary thought patterns into the service of a distinct political program. His writings suggest an attraction to the theory of climatic determinism, which maintained that climatic and aerial conditions determined their inhabitants’ every quality, from laws and manners to physical and racial attributes. The composer’s likening of music drama to climate and air—and extension of these ideas to his works’ dramaturgy, the environmental parameters of his Bayreuth Festival, and his treatment of Nature in the Ring—was an expression of political power and control. Wagner’s “atmospheric” dramas were intended to condition Germanic values in modern bodies and even provide physical rejuvenation. The simple act of experiencing a Wagnerian opera physically enacted the central aim of Götterdämmerung, shared with the composer’s larger artistic project: replacing the old order with a new one.

The Ring is regularly interpreted by opera directors as an anti-modern, pro-nature parable. Directors have reified the tetralogy’s political terms that dovetail with the composer’s aesthetic theories. Yuval Sharon’s production for Michigan Opera Theatre is not alone in adopting this approach to the Ring, which could probably be traced to the 1976 Bayreuth Festival (the “Centenary Ring”), where director Patrice Chéreau exposed the politics beneath Wagner’s myths and updated them for his own age. Building on this impulse, the San Francisco Opera’s most recent Ring cycle, directed by Francesca Zambello in 2018, depicted the Ring as a tale of extraction of the American West’s natural resources. The Bayreuth Festival’s 2016 tetralogy, directed by Frank Castorf, positioned Wagner’s heroes amidst garages, gas stations, and trailers.
In many ways, Sharon, like his predecessors, seeks to update the *Ring* for his time. Wagner was deeply devoted to manipulating spectators' aeriform environment. He believed that doing so might reverse the impact modern, sooty, diseased air might have on their bodies and their minds. Today, by presenting *Götterdämmerung* as an aerial drama, Sharon draws attention to a similar set of crises of environmental stewardship and public health (COVID-19) that inhabit the air around us. This *Götterdämmerung* might not meet every one of Wagner's socio-cultural aims, but it does thematize air in a moment of aerial catastrophe—air that, Wagner imagined, would guarantee physical fortitude.

*Kirsten Paige is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Stanford University. She received her PhD in Music History from UC Berkeley in 2018. Paige's work demonstrates how scientific knowledge reshaped musical practices and aural cultures in the 19th and 20th centuries. Her essays have appeared, or are forthcoming, in the Cambridge Opera Journal, The Opera Quarterly, the Journal of the Royal Musical Association, and the Journal of the American Musicological Society.*
TOURING ARTISTS OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
Soprano: Clodagh Earls
Mezzo-Sopranos: Aja Dier, Olivia Johnson
Tenor: David Moan
Baritones: Branden C.S. Hood, DeVonte King
Pianist: Joseph Jackson
Percussionist: Marwan Aman-Ra

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE CHILDREN’S CHORUS STAFF
Suzanne Mallare Acton, Director
Dianna Hochella, Assistant Director, Principal Chorus Conductor
Jane Panikkar, Preparatory Chorus Conductor
Twannette Nash, Chorus Administrator
Joseph Jackson, Principal Chorus Accompanist
Maria Cimarelli, Preparatory Chorus Accompanist
Emily Crombez, Theory Teacher

DANCE
Jon Teeuwissen, Artistic Advisor to Dance
Kim Smith, Dance Coordinator

FINANCE
Kimberley Burgess, Rita Winters, Accountants
Kathy Kercorian, CFO
Kimberly Reaves, Controller

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Randy Elliott, House Manager

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Molly Hughes, Opera Personnel Manager
Jean Posekany, Orchestra Librarian
Michael Sherman, Repetiteur

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Sonya Thompson, Development Resource Coordinator

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John Grigaitis, Photographer
Michael Hauser, Marketing Manager
Erica Hobbs, Communications Manager
Jon Rosemond, Marketing Operation Associate

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Tunisia Brown, Box Office Manager
Evan Carr, Patron Services Associate, Ticketing
Joy Charleston, Ticketing Associate

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
Mark Vondrak, Associate Director of Community Programs

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Michael Sherman, Principal Coach/ Accompanist
Edward Graves, Tenor
Avery Boettcher, Soprano
Darren Lekeith Drone, Baritone

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Jesse Carter, Senior Building Engineer
Dennis Wells, Facilities Manager
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Bridgeette C. Leising, Senior Sales Executive
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Jennifer Consiglio-George, Events

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A.M. Hightower, Officer
Sullivan Horton, Officer
Lt. Lorraine Monroe, Supervisor
Demetrius Newbold, Officer

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Kathleen Bennett, Production Administrator
Samantha Greene, Production Stage Manager
Alaina Bartkowiak, John Coleman, Christine Elliott, Nan Lucchini, Haill Riidsdale, Colter Schoenfish, Assistant Stage Managers

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Sonya Thompson, Development Resource Coordinator

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Heather DeFauw, Assistant Lighting Designer and Assistant Technical Director
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Emily Christianson, Wardrobe Mistress
Susan A. Fox, First Hand
Maureen Abele, Kristina Hales,
Mary Ellen Shuffett, Patricia Sova, Stitchers

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Pat McGee, Head Propertyman
Chris Baker, Head of Sound
Mary Ellen Shuffett, Head of Wardrobe
Robert Martin, Head Flyman
Gary Gilmore, Production Electrician

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