Aaron Copland
THE TENDER LAND

Michigan Opera Theatre

Saturday, March 12, 2016, 7:30 PM
Sunday, March 13, 2016, 2:30 PM
Macomb Center for the Performing Arts

Saturday, March 19, 2016, 7:30 PM
Sunday, March 20, 2016, 2:30 PM
Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center
Message from Wayne S. Brown

Welcome to Michigan Opera Theatre’s production of *The Tender Land* by Aaron Copland (1900-1990), fondly referred to as the Dean of American Composers. This also marks the second year of MOT’s Michigan Regional Initiative — a key component of our strategic plan. Building on a highly successful presentation of *Frida* by American composer Robert Xavier Rodriguez — an opera about the Mexican-American iconic figure Frida Kahlo, we are pleased to return to the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, and to inaugurate a new relationship with the Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center on the Downriver Campus of Wayne County Community College District.

Today’s production is an anchor work for members of MOT’s newly established Studio Artists Program. Our organization is fortunate to benefit from these highly talented musicians who will help MOT increase its presence among our growing regional audience. With a combination of local opera clubs (informal gatherings where guests can learn about upcoming productions), open rehearsals, pre-performance talks, and full productions, MOT is committed to engaging audiences through multiple forums.

We are delighted to acknowledge the generosity of foundation, corporate, and individual supporters who have joined us in our quest to share the excitement and satisfaction of this multidimensional art form called opera. They include the William Davidson Foundation, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

In addition, we wish to acknowledge the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, our co-producer of the opera *The Tender Land*, with special appreciation to Dr. James Jacobs, President of Macomb Community College, and Casandra E. Ulbrich, Vice President for College Advancement and Community Relations. Finally, special thanks to Anthony T. Arminiak, President of Wayne County Community College District Downriver Campus, and the Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center for hosting our inaugural presence in Taylor, Michigan.

We appreciate your support and invite you to join us in the Detroit Opera House for performances of opera, dance, and Broadway presentations.

Wayne S. Brown
President and CEO
Michigan Opera Theatre

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Message from David DiChiera

In 1978 the City of Midland, Michigan launched a celebration of the arts and sciences called Matrix under the honorary chairmanship of Michigan’s first lady Helen Milliken. I was asked if Michigan Opera Theatre could produce a work which would provide the festival with national recognition. It seemed to me that perhaps the participation of Aaron Copland, the Dean of American composers, could be the answer. His opera, *The Tender Land*, which had its world premiere by New York City Opera in 1954, had not been revived. If we could produce a beautiful production with a wonderful cast, he might be persuaded not only to attend but also to conduct. The artistic team included Broadway director Michael Montel, famous dancer-choreographer Eugene Loring, and designers Robert Joel Schwartz and Thomas Munn. The role of Laurie was sung by soprano Karen Hunt, an alumna of University of Michigan and Juilliard Opera, whose significant career included Houston, Boston, and the Spoleto Festival in Italy. The Mezzo Frances Bible who created a number of major roles at City Opera, appeared in the role of Ma Moss and Bass and George Gaynes sang the role of Grandpa Moss went on to be a well known actor in both film and television. So, after a series of phone calls in which I described the cast and artistic team Copeland agreed that this was going to be a significant revival and he would be happy to conduct. The experience of working with him was both amazing and challenging but I will leave that for the book which I must one day write. In 1984, *The Tender Land* became the centerpiece of our Michigan Opera Theatre In Residence program, in which we would spend a week in a Detroit Public School or outside community, rehearsing and integrating the school or community chorus into the second act. We held residencies at Cass Technical High School and Northwestern High School in Detroit, Seaholm High School in Birmingham, Anchor Bay High School in New Baltimore, and in the communities of Calumet and Escanaba.

And now, 32 years later we revisit *The Tender Land* as a vehicle for our newly established Studio Artists Program. It’s a perfect work for these talented young artists who spend an entire season with us working under the direction of famous tenor Richard Leech and supported by resident coach accompanist Gordon Schermer. This opera is ideal because it has a wonderful role for each of our Studio Artists—soprano Angela Theis as Laurie, mezzo Raehann Bryce-Davis as Ma Moss, tenor Joseph Michael Brent as Martin, and bass Brent Michael Smith as Grandpa Moss, assistant music direction by Gordon Schermer. This program is designed to give these young singers significant coaching not only with Richard Leech, but master classes with some of the opera world’s most famous teachers such as Martina Arroyo, Diana Soviero, Martin Katz, and Kathleen Kelly. In addition to being featured in their own production of *The Tender Land*, they are also performing in the spring season at the Detroit Opera House in both Macbeth and *The Magic Flute*. These artists are being prepared to make their mark in the opera world and we are very proud of them.
Dear Patrons,

Welcome to the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts at Macomb Community College. We’re pleased you’ve joined us for this special cultural experience, made possible through partnership with one of the region’s cultural treasures, the Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT).

Collaboration is a driving philosophy for Macomb Community College and an essential ingredient in realizing our mission of education, enrichment and economic development. We embrace partnership to create meaningful new experiences and resources for the residents of Macomb County. But, perhaps as importantly, partnership is a key tool in fostering a regional perspective that builds on our strengths, leverages the assets of our neighbors and benefits metro Detroit as a whole.

Today, on our stage, you’ll be enjoying a world-class production of The Tender Land, an archetypal American opera composed by Aaron Copland, the son of immigrants whose music has often been described as encapsulating the American spirit. Macomb Community College provides a breadth of cultural opportunities that span generations, supplement educational objectives and enrich community life. We thank the MOT for embracing our partnership and working with us to connect our community members with unique, new experiences.

We appreciate your support of the Macomb Center and Macomb Community College, and hope you enjoy the opera.

James Jacobs, PhD
President, Macomb Community College

Dear Patrons,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Wayne County Community College District’s Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center (EPAC). Our goal is to provide a variety of cultural experiences to support the discovery and richness of the arts for all of our constituents and community members.

We are very excited to provide you with the opportunity to experience the rarely performed classic American opera, The Tender Land by Aaron Copland, one of the most respected American classical composers of the twentieth century.

In an effort to bring our patrons world-class programing, the EPAC is thrilled to be working with Michigan’s premier opera company, Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT), to present this production. We are grateful for the opportunity to bring MOT to our community, further strengthening the performing arts offerings throughout our region.

We thank you for joining us for a performance and hope this will be one of many visits to Wayne County Community College District’s EPAC, your community showplace!

Dr. Curtis L. Ivery
Chancellor, Wayne County Community College District
**Welcome**

**2-5 Welcome**

The Tender Land

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**VENUES OF THE TENDER LAND**

- Opera Theatre Studio
- MOT Orchestra

**MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE**

**MARCH 2016 • THE TENDER LAND**

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Aaron Copland
THE TENDER LAND

Music: Aaron Copland
Libretto: Horace Everett
World Premiere: April 1, 1954, New York City Opera

Conductor: Suzanne Mallare Acton
Stage Director: Kristine McIntyre*
Assistant Director: Kelsey A. Ross
Chorus Master: Suzanne Mallare Acton
Choreographer: Jeff Michael Rebudal
Production Design: Monika Essen
Lighting Design: Marcus Dilliard
Wig & Makeup Design: Elizabeth Geck
Stage Manager: Ken Saltzman
Supertitles: Dee Dorsey

Scenery constructed by West End Studios, Detroit, MI.
Costumes constructed by Michigan Opera Theatre Costume Shop
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Conductor: Suzanne Mallare Acton
Stage Director: Kristine McIntyre*
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Cast

Laurie..........................................................Angela Theis†
Ma Moss..................................................Raehann Bryce-Davis†*
Top....................................................Harry Greenleaf†
Martin ..................................................Joseph Michael Brent†
Grandpa Moss ........................................Brent Michael Smith†
Mr. Splinters ........................................Brian Leduc
Mrs. Splinters........................................Ashley Dixon*
Beth, a child .........................................Elliana Michaels (March 12, 19)+
Lacey Cooper (March 13, 20)+

Mrs. Jenks ..............................................Clodagh Earls
Mr. Jenks..............................................Branden C. S. Hood
Dancer..................................................Angela Cavazos
Dancer..................................................Scott Clark*

* Michigan Opera Theatre debut
† Michigan Opera Theatre Studio Artist
+ Michigan Opera Theatre Children’s Chorus

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Synopsis

Act I
Beth, a young girl, is playing with her doll, Daniel, in front of her family’s farmhouse. The mailman, Mr. Splinters, brings a package for her mother. It is Beth’s older sister Laurie’s graduation dress; the next day she will become the first in their family to graduate from high school. Ma Moss invites Splinters to the graduation party that night; Splinters tells her that two strange men have been seen in the neighborhood, and that they have raped two of the local girls. Laurie comes in; she wonders that her childhood has passed so fast; she feels like she has outgrown her home town. She is angry that her mother, and especially her grandfather, tries to control her life.

Two drifters, Martin and Top, enter; they meet Laurie, and convince her grandfather, against his better judgement, to hire them to help with the harvest. Laurie invites them to her party, and Top asks Martin to get Grandpa drunk there so he can get acquainted with Laurie.

Act II
At the party, Grandpa makes a toast to Laurie; while the guests dance, Top begins to get Grandpa drunk. Ma Moss, still suspicious, sends Mr. Splinters for the sherriff. Martin dances with Laurie; the two of them, smitten with each other, go off alone to the porch; their kiss is interrupted by Grandpa, and Ma Moss accuses the boys of being the men who attacked the other local girls; just as she does, though, Splinters returns, saying the sherriff has already caught those men, who have confessed. Grandpa tells Martin and Top to leave by morning.

Act III
That night, Martin and Laurie meet secretly outside. They agree that Laurie will come with Martin when he leaves, but after she leaves Martin begins to have second thoughts; when Top arrives, he convinces Martin that Laurie couldn’t come with them; they depart. Laurie, coming out and finding them gone, decides to leave anyway rather than staying for her graduation. Ma Moss, left alone with Beth, turns her attention to her younger daughter; as the curtain falls, she goes back into the house and Beth is left playing in the road as at the beginning of the opera.
America’s Copland

By Austin Stewart

Aaron Copland (1900–1990) possessed an intrinsic talent for creating music that is both serious and popular, cerebral and accessible, formal and progressive. The future “Dean of American Composers” stormed onto this country’s music scene when he premiered his own Piano Concerto in 1926 with the Boston Symphony. Copland suffused his new variegated genre of the “Jazz Concerto” with touches of urban blues tunes and dance-band rhythms. But he, along with the rest of the country, had inevitably to admit that the energy and prosperity of the Jazz Age was quickly coming to a halt, crashing headfirst into the bust of the Great Depression. “Where do we go from here?” seemed to be the question on everyone’s lips. Copland’s own response came in his writings on music, and he concluded that the music of his generation “should no longer be confined to the sphere of the special society” but should “interest the general public.” During the 1930s and 40s, he created “sketches” of life in America with orchestral works broadcast nationally, wrote music to heighten Hollywood screenplays by no less a luminary than John Steinbeck, worked alongside Benny Goodman to create the finest clarinet concerto after Mozart’s, composed his one-act opera The Second Hurricane for performance by high school students, and expressed one-act opera alongside Benny Goodman to create the finest performances by high school students. His music portrayed rural landscapes as well as great metropolises, and celebrated both the past and present simultaneously; music expressed within and formed by the seismic cultural shifts of the Great Depression and World War II.

Copland’s most expressive and enduring compositions, The Tender Land among them, were fashioned through an alchemic collision of genius, inspiration, and opportunity. After the war, American composers took a new interest in opera, especially in creating operas under the auspices of the newly established NBC Opera Theatre, a subsidiary of the National Broadcasting Corporation that televised operas nationwide in English. Copland had successfully resisted writing a full-length opera until he was over fifty; yet even he could hardly ignore a letter received in the spring of 1952 from Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein commissioning an opera for NBC. Since Copland’s enthusiasm for various kinds of musical composition had led him to write for radio, theater, ballet, and film, it follows that he would be intrigued by the idea of composing for the exciting new medium of television. The creative process was swift, as his collaborator and paramour Erik Johns, who wrote the text of The Tender Land under the penname Horace Everett, recollected:

One day [Copland] played me several songs from his notebook and showed me a book he admired, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men by James Agee and Walker Evans… From this setting, I derived the basic idea of the libretto — two men from an outside world “invading” the inside world of a provincial family. I carefully examined the photographs and kept coming back to the faces of the mother and young daughter: one, still a mother but passive and stony; the other not yet hardened by the grim life. What effect would the entrance of strangers have upon these lives? The answer to this question came to be my plot.

In The Tender Land, Copland and Johns envision a close and nurturing community, one in which all its citizens prop up the happiness and security of a single individual: Laurie. This community that has raised her looks on Laurie as its future, while she looks toward the promise of a wider world, which crosses her threshold in the form of two drifters: Martin and Top. At the height of Act I, friends and strangers proclaim together their solidarity in “The Promise of Living,” a congregational song in which Copland employs the nineteenth-century revivalist hymn “Zion’s Walls” so that the concord of the moment could not be lost: “The promise of growing / with faith and with knowing / is born of our sharing / our love with our neighbor.” But when gossips begin to unjustly accuse Martin and Top of a crime, this fanciful egalitarianism withers under the anxiety of suspicion. Yet despite the fact that they are declared innocent, they are “guilty all the same;” the blessings of harvest cannot be reaped in a climate of fear and distrust.

Copland’s own familiarity with similar climates and verdicts cannot be overstated, and Johns’ question, “What effect do strangers have on our daily lives?” was particularly unsettling at that moment in our history. In 1953, while working on The Tender Land, his beloved orchestral work Lincoln Portrait was pulled on a day’s notice from Dwight D. Eisenhower’s inaugural program, for reasons as yet unknown to the public. Later in May of that year, the composer was called before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, chaired at the time by Joseph McCarthy, to testify on “un-American activities.” Copland was polite during questioning, though reserved and not particularly helpful as a witness, and in the end they could do little more than scrutinize question-able affiliations.

Copland’s music was never touched in the hearing, however; how could they begin to question music that was so singularly “American?” And what’s more, since the Depression and especially World War II, Copland’s music had become entertainment for all audiences, the everyman had been replaced by the common man, and the rural community that had once protected Laurie was now one and the same as the American heartland. “Musicians make music out of feelings aroused from public events,” Copland boldly told his inquisitors in 1953. Perhaps nowhere else are those feelings more raw and bared as in this story of a land still tender from its growing pains.
The six resident artists of Michigan Opera Theatre Studio represent some of the most exciting emerging talent in opera today.

Coming to Detroit from all different areas of the country, these early career opera professionals gain valuable experience through myriad performance opportunities in main stage and community productions, and hone their skills through master classes and training with an array of world-class professionals, guest artists, and coaches.

Throughout their residency, Studio Artists receive advanced individual training from MOT’s Director of Resident Artist Programs Richard Leech, Dr. David DiChiera, and MOT’s Assistant Music Director, Suzanne Mallare Acton.

Supported by a major grant from the William Davidson Foundation, the program serves as a central component of MOT’s enhanced presence in the community through productions in the Detroit Opera House, community venues, recitals and special events. MOT’s community initiative productions are now selected and mounted specifically for the Studio Program. Following last season’s Frida, The Tender Land fulfills MOT’s community initiative to produce a full-scale opera annually in venues throughout metro Detroit.

“Michigan Opera Theatre Studio serves as a central component of MOT’s enhanced presence in the community. The Studio Artists benefit from the vision and guidance of Dr. David DiChiera and some of the leading coaches in the opera industry.”

— Wayne S. Brown, President and CEO of Michigan Opera Theatre
Artist Profiles

Suzanne Mallare Acton
Conductor, Chorus Master
Conductor
Suzanne Mallare Acton continues to earn respect and admiration for her performances in both the concert hall and the opera house. From Handel’s Messiah to contemporary jazz, she is recognized for her versatility and dynamic style. For Michigan Opera Theatre, Ms. Acton’s conducting credits include Frida, A View from the Bridge, West Side Story, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, The Music Man, The Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, La Bohème, Die Fledermaus, La Traviata, A Little Night Music, The Medium, and Carmina Burana.

Additional opera credits include My Fair Lady and La Traviata for Dayton Opera, The Merry Widow and Madama Butterfly for Artpark, La Traviata, Gianni Schicchi, and L’Elisir D’Amore for Verdi Opera Theatre, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, La Traviata, The Magic Flute, and Carmen at the Wharton Center, and Tosca for Augusta Opera. Symphonic concerts include the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, the Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, The Lexington Bach Festival, and the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Acton is also Artistic and Music Director of Rackham Choir. Under her leadership, Rackham was awarded the 2008 Governor’s Award for Arts & Culture. Ms. Acton has been recognized by Corp! Magazine as one of Michigan’s 85 Most Powerful Women. In 2014, she was selected as an honoree of WJR’s 2014 Class of Women Who Lead.

Joseph Michael Brent
Martin
Joseph Michael Brent is an artist of Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Other roles in Michigan Opera Theatre’s 2015-16 season include 3rd SS Officer in Mieczyslaw Weinberg’s The Passenger, Malcolm in Verdi’s Macbeth, and first armored man in Mozart’s The Magic Flute. In 2015, Mr. Brent made both role and company debuts as Mayor Upfold in the Bronx Opera’s production of Albert Herring and Edgardo in the New York Opera Exchange production of Lucia di Lammermoor. He earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Georgia in the fall of 2014 with a dissertation on selected vocal works of Giovanni Paolo Bottesini. He is a native New Yorker, a proud graduate of the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, and holds an undergraduate degree from the conservatory of music at Purchase College S.U.N.Y. in double bass performance. He was a student of Metropolitan Opera veteran, baritone, Frederick Burchinal.

Raehann Bryce-Davis
Ma Moss
Raehann Bryce-Davis, Mezzo-soprano, has been hailed by the New York Times as a “striking mezzo soprano” that “sang and spoke potently and moved vivaciously.” In MOT’s spring opera season, she will sing the role of the Lady-in-waiting in Macbeth and Third Lady in The Magic Flute.

Ms. Bryce-Davis is the 2015 winner of the International Hilde Zadek Competition at the Musikverein in Vienna and the Sedat Gürel – Güzin Gürel International Voice Competition in Istanbul. Young Artist engagements have included Merola Opera Program, Florida Grand Opera (2 seasons), Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and Chautauqua Opera. She holds a Professional Studies Certificate and Master of Music from the Manhattan School of Music.

Angela Cavazos
Dancer
Angela Cavazos made her debut with Michigan Opera Theatre as a dancer in last season’s production of Frida. Hailing from Southfield, MI, Ms. Cavazos is a proud graduate of Point Park University holding a BA in Musical Theatre with a dance minor. Favorite past credits include dance captain and aerialist for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Contact, Sweet Charity, and performances with Pillow Project.

Scott Clark
Dancer
Scott Clark was born in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. He started dance at 16 years old at Arts Academy in the Woods, a performing arts high school, studying under DeWarne Long, Nicole Hopkins, and Jennifer Meeks. In 2012 he started dancing at Ann Parsley School of Dance and performing as an apprentice with the Macomb Ballet Company under directors Amber Megna-Michalik and Sarah Boik. Mr. Clark has a BFA Dance Major at Wayne State University, and a recipient of the Maggie Allessee Scholarship. He is currently in his sophomore year at Wayne State. Mr. Clark has attended the Blue Lake Dance Intensive and Complexions Contemporary Ballet Summer Intensive.

Lacey Cooper
Beth, a child
Lacey Cooper has been a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre Children’s Chorus since 2011. Previous performances include Arbor Opera Theater’s production of The Sound of Music (Marta) and Emerson Troupe Players’ production of The Seussical (Mozey). She is a 7th grader at Emerson School and enjoys singing, dancing, and playing with her cat “Pumpkin.”

Marcus Dilliard
Marcus has designed for opera and theater across North America, including numerous productions for The Minnesota Opera, Lyric Opera Kansas City, Madison Opera, and the Portland Opera. Recent designs include Don Giovanni for Lyric Opera Kansas City, The Barber of Seville for Madison Opera, Gypsy and All Is Calm for Theatre Latte Da, To Kill a Mockingbird for the Guthrie Theater, Carmina Burana for Minnesota Dance Theater, and Silent Night for L’Opera de Montreal.

Upcoming projects include Tales of
Ashley Dixon

Mrs. Splinters
Mezzo-soprano, Ashley Dixon is from Peachtree City, Ga and is in her second year of her Master’s degree at Michigan. She received a bachelor in Vocal Performance from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. While at LSU, Ms. Dixon Prince Orlofsky in Die Fledermaus, Carmen in La tragédie de Carmen, and the title role in Rossini’s La cenerentola. In 2012, Ms. Dixon made her European debut as Rosina in Il barbiere di Siviglia at La Musica Lirica. This past summer she sang Flora in Verdi’s La Traviata with DMMO. During her time at the University of Michigan, she sang the roles of Rosina in Il barbiere di Siviglia, Second Lady in Die Zauberflöte, Sister Helen Prejean in Heggies’s Dead Man Walking and the title role in Giulio Cesare.

Last summer she sang La Ciesca in Gianni Schicchi and Mrs. Nolan in The Medium at the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco.

Clodagh Earls

Mrs. Jenks
Canadian Soprano Clodagh Earls is an exceptional young artist, quickly gaining recognition for her soaring coloratura, vocal warmth, and charming stage presence on the North American operatic and concert stage. Ms. Earls recently made her Michigan Opera Theatre debut as an apprentice artist, performing in the company premiere of Robert Xavier Rodriguez’s Frida, Lehár’s The Merry Widow, and Gounod’s Faust.

Ms. Earls is routinely engaged by the Oakville Symphony Orchestra, Masterworks of Oakville Chorus & Symphony, Oakville Chamber Orchestra, the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, and the Stratford Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Earls holds a Master of Music: Voice Performance from the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Music, and a Bachelor of Music: Honours Voice Performance from the University of Western Ontario.

Monika Essen

Production Designer
Monika Essen is an award-winning, nationally recognized artist and designer. The recipient of the prestigious Detroit Free Press Lawrence Devine Award for Outstanding Contribution to Theatre, she studied interior architecture and environmental design at Parsons School of Design and received her MFA in scenography from the renowned Hilberry Repertory Company. Ms. Essen has designed countless productions in theatre, opera, and film; recently designing MOT’s acclaimed productions of Frida, and Camina Burana and The Medium. Additionally, she creates furniture, museum exhibits, interiors, and full sensory, multi-media environments for residential and commercial clients, including the Detroit Zoo.

Elizabeth Geck

Wig and Makeup Designer
Elizabeth Geck has been coordinating the Michigan Opera Theatre wig and make-up crew for the last seven years, as well as assisting the Wig and Make-up designer for main stage opera productions. Ms. Geck has assisted with several new productions including Aida, Cyrano, Margaret Garner, and Pearl Fisher. Elizabeth designed wigs and make-up for Motor City Lyric’s production of Amahl and the Night Visitors as well as Grosse Pointe Theater’s production of West Side Story.

Harry Greenleaf

Top
Baritone Harry Greenleaf is a native of Wixom, Michigan and alumnus of Michigan State University College of Music. He is pursuing a Master’s of Music at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. This fall Mr. Greenleaf performed as Danilo in CCM Opera’s The Merry Widow, and will be seen at CCM in April as The Forester in The Cunning Little Vixen. In 2013 and 2014 he was a Studio Artist with the Wolf Trap Opera Company, where he sang the role of Baron Douphol in La traviata with the National Symphony Orchestra, and Monsieur Barbu in Les mamelles de Tirésias. This past summer he was an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera, covering the role of Sonora in La fanciulla del West. This summer he will appear with Glimmerglass Opera as Anthony Hope in Sweeney Todd.

Brian Leduc

Mr. Splinters
Brian Leduc is a Detroit native who completed his undergraduate studies at Wayne State University, where he received acclaim in operatic and musical theatre productions. He has also received recognition for his work with early music and oratorio. He appears as a tenor soloist regularly in the Detroit area and internationally for works such as Handel’s Messiah, Verdi’s Requiem, and others, including a long list of relatively new works. Opera News describes Mr. Leduc as having a “ringing tenor” and being “especially impressive…with firm tonal impact.” His recent MOT credits include various roles in Frida, Tony in A View from the Bridge, Spoletta in Tosca, Monostatos in The Magic Flute, and Don Basilio in Marriage of Figaro.

Branden C. S. Hood

Mr. Jenks
Branden C. S. Hood performed Il Conte in Le nozze di Figaro, and Falstaff in Die lustigen weiber von Windsor during 2015, and the title role of Don Giovanni in 2013 with the Lyric Opera Studio of Weimar. In 2014, he was granted the Angel Scholarship from Michigan Opera Theatre to attend AIMS in Austria. He also performs with MOT’s Community Programs department as Count Formaggio in Pizza con funghi and the Mayor in How Nanita Learned to Make Flan. He received his Specialist Degree of Music from The University of Michigan in 2009. In 2010 he was also awarded an Encouragement Award the Michigan District of The Metropolitan Opera National Auditions.
Michigan Opera Theatre

Kristine McIntyre
Stage Director
Kristine McIntyre has directed more than 70 operas across the U.S. with a focus on new, contemporary and American works. Productions include Jake Heggie’s Dead Man Walking (Des Moines Metro Opera, Madison Opera), Jonathan Dove’s Flight (Pittsburgh Opera, Austin Lyric Opera), the world premier of Kirke Mechem’s John Brown Lyric Opera of Kansas City), Robert Aldridge’s Elmer Gantry (Tulsa Opera), Carlisle Floyd’s Of Mice and Men (Utah Opera, Austin Opera, Tulsa Opera), new productions of Street Scene, The Tender Land and Lee Hoiby’s Bon Appétit and the world premier of The Canticle of the Black Madonna (Newmark Theater, Portland). Upcoming projects include a new production of Manon, The Tales of Hoffmann, Madama Butterfly, the world premiere of Louis Karchin’s Jane Eyre, a revival of her film-noir Don Giovanni, and the exciting new production of Jake Heggie’s Moby Dick designed by Erhard Rom.

Elliana Michaels
Beth, a child
Elliana Michaels, a fifth grader at Keith Elementary in West Bloomfield, is thrilled to be making her MOT role debut as Beth in The Tender Land. This is Elliana’s first year as a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre Children’s Chorus, which has been the highlight of her young career and given her the joy of performing in this season’s La Bohème.

Jeff Michael Rebudal
Choreographer
Jeff Michael Rebudal is the Artistic Director of New York-and-Detroit-based Rebudal Dance and is an original founding member of the critically acclaimed Seán Curran Company. Mr. Rebudal’s opera and theatre choreography credits include L’Etoile (New York City Opera, Opéra de Montréal, Glimmerglass Opera, Bergen National Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Austin Lyric Opera), Romeo et Juliette, La Traviata, La Rondine, A Little Night Music and The Merry Widow (Michigan Opera Theatre), and Carmen (Cincinnati Opera) in which the Metropolitan Opera News described the dances as “...delightful choreography... a bright moment.” Mr. Rebudal recently choreographed Two Gentlemen of Verona for The Old Globe. His choreography has also been presented at Joyce SoHo, Danspace Project, Lincoln Center, NYC Downtown Dance Festival, Cunningham Studio, and DUMBO Dance Festival, among other venues such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Manila and Anargyrios & Korgialenios Theatre of Helioupolis in Greece. Mr. Rebudal is an Associate Professor and Head of Dance at Wayne State University and has an M.F.A. from the American University and a B.A. from the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa.

Gordon Schermer
Coach/ Accompanist
Gordon Schermer is an extremely versatile musician equally at home in opera, art song, musical theater, and chamber music. His performances have taken him across the United States and abroad to Canada, Italy, Austria and Israel. He has performed in venues such as Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall and Steinway Hall in New York, and the Salle Bourgie in Montréal. In Montréal, he helped recreate a unique two piano transcription of Poulenc’s Les Mamelles de Tirésias originally arranged by Benjamin Britten for the Aldeburgh Festival. He has been a fellowship coach at the Aspen Music Festival and School where he served as the children's chorus master for Puccini’s La Bohème and rehearsal pianist/coach for Britten’s The Rape of Lucretia. In addition, he was also chosen to play the Verdi Requiem for renowned conductor Leonard Slatkin. He has served as an adjunct professor at Montclair State University, vocal coach at Manhattan School of Music and staff pianist at the Bard College Conservatory of Music. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Piano Performance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Master's Degree in Accompanying from Manhattan School of Music.

Brent Michael Smith
Grandpa Moss
As a Studio Artist with Michigan Opera Theatre this season, Brent sang Colline in La Bohème, and Second S.S. Officer in The Passenger. This spring he will sing the role of the Doctor in Macbeth and the Speaker in The Magic Flute.

This year, Mr. Smith sang Harry Hopkins in the world premiere of Daron Hagen’s A Woman in Morocco, as a part of Kentucky Opera’s American Opera Initiative, and was an Apprentice Artist with Sarasota Opera where he covered Charles V/The Monk in Don Carlos as well as sang in scenes from Fidelio, L’italia in Algeri and I Lombardi.

He received his Master of Music degree under the tutelage of John Hines. He received his Bachelor’s in music in piano performance from Hope College (Holland, MI). Mr. Smith is a first-place winner in the Grand Rapids Opera Competition (2012).

Angela Theis
Laurie
Soprano Angela Theis has performed several roles this year at Michigan Opera Theatre through her engagement as a Studio Artist, including Laurie in The Tender Land, 2nd Apparition in Macbeth, and Papagena in The Magic Flute. Previously, she has appeared with the company as Marzelline in Fidelio, Barbarina in The Marriage of Figaro, and the High Priestess in Aida. A highlight of her career was when Dr. David DiChiera chose her to sing his compositions at his 2013 Kresge Eminent Artist award presentation and his 2015 tribute concert at the Detroit Opera House. The Boston Globe praised her for “a bright, bold, and beguilingly sung Zerlina” in Mozart’s Don Giovanni. In 2013, Ms. Theis won the Audience Choice Award at the 2013 Meistersinger Competition in Austria. Ms. Theis completed a postgraduate fellowship in Salzburg, Austria, and holds degrees from New England Conservatory and University of Notre Dame.
Macomb Center for the Performing Arts

The Macomb Center for the Performing Arts (www.MacombCenter.com) is a community enrichment program of Macomb Community College dedicated to providing a diverse range of cultural enrichment experiences, and to inspire and encourage artistic expression through education, performance and volunteer opportunities. Hosting more than 100,000 visitors annually, the Macomb Center presents high-quality professional performances, offers educational outreach in the arts, provides a performance venue for community-based arts organizations, and, in partnership with the adjacent Lorenzo Cultural Center, creates unique opportunities for multifaceted cultural programming.

Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center

The 78,000 square foot Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center features an 812 seat theatre, state of the art technical amenities, studio/rehearsal space, a gallery for the visual arts and up to 14 classroom/seminar rooms, all on the beautiful, wooded, 97-acre Downriver Campus.

WCCCD’s mission is to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve their goals through excellent accessible services, culturally diverse experiences and globally competitive higher education and career advancement programs.
Aaron Copland
THE TENDER LAND
MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE
1526 Broadway • Detroit, MI 48226
michiganopera.org