

THE EGYPTIAN HELEN



JULY 24 – AUGUST 2, 2026

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The Fisher Center is a premier professional performing arts center and a hub for research and education that demonstrates Bard College's commitment to the performing arts as a cultural and educational necessity. To support artists, students, and audiences in the examination of artistic ideas, the Fisher Center develops, produces, and presents performing arts across disciplines through new productions and context-rich programs that challenge and inspire.

Home is the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, designed by Frank Gehry and located on the campus of Bard College in New York's Hudson Valley. This world-class theater building will soon be complemented by a new studio building designed by Maya Lin, scheduled to open in October 2026. More than 200 events and 50,000 visitors are hosted at the Fisher Center each year, and over 300 professional artists are employed annually. As a powerful catalyst of art-making regionally, nationally, and worldwide, the Fisher Center produces 8 to 10 major new works in various disciplines every year. The Fisher Center offers outstanding programs to many communities, including the students and faculty of Bard College, and audiences in the Hudson Valley, New York City, across the country, and around the world. Building on a 166-year history as a competitive and innovative undergraduate institution, Bard is committed to enriching culture, public life, and democratic discourse by training tomorrow's thought leaders.

The Fisher Center was born from the Bard Music Festival, founded in 1990, which, for the first 13 years of its existence, occupied several spaces on campus, including a large tent. Each summer, the Bard Music Festival focuses on the life, work, and influences of one composer, promoting new ways of understanding and presenting the history of music to a contemporary audience. When the Fisher Center and its two theaters opened in 2003, the summer festival expanded to include a fully staged opera, as well as theater and dance performances. The highly acclaimed opera program brings unjustly neglected works to the stage in major productions—often making their US debuts.

Through Fisher Center LAB, the Center's acclaimed residency and commissioning program, artists are provided with custom-made support toward their innovative projects, and their work has been seen in over 100 communities around the world. Resident choreographer Pam Tanowitz's 2018 *Four Quartets* was recognized as "the greatest creation of dance theater so far this century" by *The New York Times*. In 2019, the Fisher Center won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical for Daniel Fish's production of *Oklahoma!*, which began life in 2007 as an undergraduate production at Bard and was produced professionally by the Fisher Center in 2015 before transferring to New York City. *Illinois*, a 2023 Fisher Center world premiere from artists Sufjan Stevens, Justin Peck, and Jackie Sibblies Drury was recognized with a Tony Award for Best Choreography following its tour and transfer to Broadway.

The Fisher Center is home to several of Bard's academic programs in the performing arts. Year-round, it hosts performances by the undergraduate Dance Program and Theater and Performance Program; the US-China Music Institute of the Bard College Conservatory of Music; The Orchestra Now (TÖN), a Bard graduate program that is training the next generation of classical-music ambassadors; and students at the Bard Conservatory, the first (and so far only) conservatory to require all its students to pursue a bachelor of arts degree in a field other than music in addition to their specialized music studies. As a hybrid institution, the Fisher Center brings together professional and academic art-making of the highest caliber, where student and professional artists work side by side, learning from each other and informing one another's practices.

Fisher Center at Bard

Chair Jeanne Donovan Fisher

Artistic Director and Chief Executive Gideon Lester

Executive Producer and Chief Operating Officer Aaron Mattocks

THE EGYPTIAN HELEN

Composed by **Richard Strauss**

Libretto by **Hugo von Hofmannsthal**

American Symphony Orchestra

Conductor Leon Botstein

Bard Festival Chorale

Chorus Director James Bagwell

Stage Direction Christian R  th

Scenic Design Christian R  th and Daniel Unger

Costume Design Mattie Ullrich

Lighting Design Tyler Micoleau

Projection Design Elaine J. McCarthy

Choreography Catherine Galasso

Hair and Makeup Design Brittany Rappise

Sosnoff Theater

Friday, July 24 at 6:30 pm

Sunday, July 26 at 2 pm

Wednesday, July 29 at 2 pm

Friday, July 31 at 4 pm

Sunday, August 2 at 2 pm

Running time is approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission.

CAST

Helena, wife of Menelaus	Hailey Clark
Menelaus	John Matthew Myers
Hermione, their child	Cecilia Popp / Keya Upadhyaya
Aithra, daughter of an Egyptian king, sorceress	Jana McIntyre
Altair	Blake Denson
Da-Ud, his son	Shawn Roth
Two Servants of Aithra	Catherine Creed*, Deborah Nansteel
Four Elves	Holly Thomas, Mary Burke Barber*, Hai Ting Chinn, Allison Gish
Omniscient Seashell	Deborah Nansteel

BARD FESTIVAL CHORALE

Sopranos	Altos	Tenors
Sarah Benzinger	Sarah Bleasdale	Cristóbal Arias
Erin Brittain	Jennifer Borghi	Daveed Buzaglo
Kirsten Brown	Christine Browne-Munz	Jack Cotterell
Lindsey Chinn	Teresa Buchholz	Rashard Deleston
Christine Cornell	Hai Ting Chinn	Ethan Fran
Margaret Dudley	Allison Gish	Matthew Krenz
Sarah Griffiths	Jessica Kimple	Eric William Lamp
Manami Hattori	Erica Koehring	Nathan Siler
Julie Liston Johnson	JingYi Stella Luan VAP '27	Michael Steinberger
Francesca Lionetta VAP '23	Ema Mitrovic	Tyler Tejada
Erinn Sensenig	Katherine Doe Morse	
Laura Stanell VAP '27	Heather Petrie	
Holly Thomas	Elizabeth Picker	
	Kaitlyn Tierney	

*SUMMERSCAPE RESIDENT ARTISTS

Mary Burke Barber, *soprano*
Catherine Creed, *soprano*
Mary Hoskins, *soprano*
Lindsey Polcyn, *mezzo-soprano*
Ryan Smith, *tenor*

The SummerScape Opera's Resident Artists Program is a summerlong professional development and mentorship experience offering valuable training and performance opportunities to emerging opera singers. This year's cohort of vocal artists has joined the Bard SummerScape artist roster to hold understudy and cast comprimario roles in the opera and will perform in Bard Music Festival programs while receiving regular coaching and masterclasses throughout their residency.

Producer

Marco Nisticò

Vocal Casting

Joshua Winograde

Assistant Conductor

Zachary Schwartzman

Musical Preparation

Husan Chun-Novak

Lyndsi Maus

Dramaturg and Diction Coach

Nils Neubert

Chorus Contractor

Nancy Wertsch

Music Coach, Chorus

James Bassi

Assistant Stage Director

Laurie Feldman

Stage Manager

Lynn Krynicki

Assistant Stage Managers

Patricia Garvey

Abbey Murray-Stark

Tracy Hofmann

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Viktor Petrov

Assistant Costume Designers

Sarah Lawrence

Amy Sutton

Costume Coordinator

Maureen Wynne

Assistant Chorus Master

/ **Score Preparation /**

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Lilly E. Cadow GCP '22

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Peter Filkins

Supertitle Creator

Nicolás Gómez Amín

Supertitle Operator

Emanuel Cohen

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HD Video**Livestream Director**

Habib Azar

Camera Operators

Ian Kosmaczewski

John Kosmaczewski

Nicholas Sherman

Opera Livestream**Stage Manager**

Lauren Krohn

Score Reader

Wyland Stephenson

HD Camera Equipment

HB Live

Scenery Construction

Adirondack Scenic Studios

Costume Construction

Arel Studio

Sarah Dixey

Nato Hermann

Kelly Isaac

Jill DiGiuseppe Costumes

John Cowles Studio

Annalynn Luu

Amy Teifer

Mary Torres

Alexander Zeek

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SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

The island of Aithra, off the coast of Egypt

In her island palace, the enchantress Aithra, mistress of the sea god Poseidon, frets over her lover's absence and laments her loneliness. She questions the Omniscient Seashell, a creature capable of perceiving everything that happens in the world, as to Poseidon's whereabouts. When the Seashell tells her that the god is with the Ethiopians, Aithra becomes distraught, and her maidservant tries to persuade her to take a narcotizing drink of lotus juice. Aithra refuses, and her quarrel with the servant is interrupted only by the Seashell's sudden report of a ship near the island. The Seashell describes a beautiful woman asleep on the ship, unaware that a man is creeping toward her with murderous intention. The woman is Helen of Troy, and the man is her husband, Menelaus of Sparta. Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, is infamous for having run off with Paris, prince of Troy, and thus instigating a bloody ten-year war that ended with the complete destruction of the city. Aithra, sufficiently distracted from her own worries by this chance event, springs into action and prevents the murder by raising a storm that wrecks the ship and drives the couple to her island.

When the exhausted pair reaches the palace, Aithra conceals herself and listens in on their conversation. She learns that Menelaus is so embittered by his wife's infidelity and the war it caused that he cannot forgive her and intends to kill her to avenge all the lives lost in Troy. Helen, however, is still in love with her husband and pleads in vain with him for reconciliation. Aithra, incensed at Menelaus's behavior toward this beautiful woman, sends her elves to tease and torment him. The elves conjure up visions of Paris once again running away with Helen. Menelaus, frantic and confused, rushes out in pursuit of the apparition with his sword drawn. When he is gone, Aithra approaches Helen and gains her trust by offering her some soothing lotus juice. They pledge friendship to one another, and Aithra shows a drowsy Helen to her bed.

Menelaus soon returns to the palace, thinking in his confusion that he has finally killed Paris and Helen. Aithra introduces herself to him and, after ensuring that he has had a substantial drink of the lotus juice, fabricates a story that she believes will reconcile Menelaus to his wife. She tells him that the woman who ran away with Paris and caused the Trojan War was, in fact, a phantom, a double of Helen. The real Helen was transported by the kindly gods to the home of Aithra's father, where she slept the entire time, faithfully dreaming of her husband. The real Helen, Aithra tells him, is present and ready to be awakened. As Helen wakes, Aithra cleverly repeats the story and fills Helen in on the scheme. Menelaus is dazzled by Helen's beauty, but still rather confused. He thought he had just killed Helen with Paris; is this the real Helen, or a phantom? But as the lotus juice takes effect, he becomes more complacent, and Aithra offers to return them to their home. Helen, however, expresses anxiety at the thought of returning to Sparta right away and begs Aithra to send them to some isolated place where no one knows them, so they can mend their relationship in peace. Aithra hits upon the idea of sending them to an oasis beneath the Atlas Mountains, where she will provide them with a tented pavilion and amenities. Aithra cautions Helen above all not to forget to slip Menelaus more lotus juice as needed, to keep his troubled memories in check. Helen and Menelaus then retire to bed while Aithra makes preparations for their trip.

ACT TWO

An oasis at the foot of the Atlas Mountains

In the morning, Helen wakes in the tent at the oasis, elated by the successes of the previous night. But her joy is short-lived when Menelaus himself wakes and makes clear that his doubts have deepened. He believes he has killed Helen and that the woman standing next to him is a phantom conjured up by Aithra. Helen hastily attempts to get him to drink some more lotus juice, but he refuses, and she realizes that the potion is not a genuine solution. Menelaus is about to leave when suddenly a troop of desert warriors led by Altair, prince of the Atlas Mountains, appears. Altair explains that he has come at the request of Aithra to greet the unknown visitors. But his dignified manner fails him when he sees Helen and is instantly spellbound by her beauty, along with the rest of his men. Menelaus greets the situation with weary familiarity and is only shaken from his depression when Da-ud, son of Altair, steps forward to join the declarations of passion for Helen. Menelaus's tenuous mental condition causes Da-ud to assume the identity of Paris in Menelaus's imagination, thus setting an ominous train of events in motion. Altair, whose contempt for Menelaus is palpable, provocatively suggests a hunt that would team Menelaus and Da-ud. Menelaus recalls an earlier hunt when he returned home to find Helen gone with Paris. The hunt begins under a foreboding cloud.

Helen, left alone, reflects with despair on her situation, but is interrupted by the sudden appearance of Aithra and her maidservants. They anxiously search for the flask of lotus juice and discover to their relief that the flask is unopened. Aithra explains to Helen that her servant stupidly put in the chest not only the potion of forgetfulness but also the potion of remembrance. Helen's response surprises Aithra, however; remembrance is precisely what she wants in order to restore Menelaus's memory and resolve their predicament truthfully and honestly.

Despite Aithra's resistance, Helen and the servants prepare the drink of remembrance but are interrupted by the sudden intrusion of Altair, who declares that Helen shall belong to him. He orders a feast to be prepared to mark his arrogant certainty, but Helen only laughs dismissively. Then, tragedy strikes: the maidservants observing the hunt witness how Menelaus chases Da-ud and kills him. The hunting party returns with Da-ud's body. Altair, blinded by his passion for Helen, seems indifferent, but Menelaus, more distracted than ever, realizes with horror what he has done only when Helen explains it to him. She finishes preparing the drink of remembrance even as they are surrounded by Altair's armed eunuchs who arrive to ensure their presence at the feast. Helen presses the drink on Menelaus. Believing it to be poison from the phantom Helen, he accepts it willingly, comforted by the fact that he will finally be reunited in death with the real Helen. As memory floods back, his vengeful rage gives way to a new perspective on Helen. He realizes that he must confront the good and the bad in his marriage in order to reconcile all the aspects of Helen—her human frailty, as well as her divine beauty. Instead of lamenting the loss of a delusive idealization of womanhood, he must acknowledge the real woman he married. Suddenly, Altair rushes in to take Helen by force, but his plan is defeated by the arrival of Poseidon's warriors, summoned by Aithra. With them is Hermione, the daughter of Helen and Menelaus, whom Aithra has also brought in order to solidify further the bonds between husband and wife. As the curtain falls, the restored family prepares to embark on a new life together.

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Adapted from a program note written for Richard Strauss's *Die ägyptische Helena*, a concert performed on January 18, 1998, at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall

Librettists have a strange habit of disappearing from view as individuals in their own right. For instance, everyone knows that Lorenzo Da Ponte collaborated with Wolfgang Amadé Mozart on three of the greatest operas ever written—*Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*—but Da Ponte's name survives primarily as a result of his association with the great composer. Of all the librettists who should not be subject to such a fate, Hugo von Hofmannsthal is the first to come to mind. In German-speaking culture, Hofmannsthal retains a stature equivalent to that of his musical collaborator, Richard Strauss. Independent of his many well-known works with Strauss, Hofmannsthal was an Austrian man of letters with outstanding accomplishments in poetry, prose, and drama. He was a founder of the Salzburg Festival. Even if he had never worked with Richard Strauss, his writing would be required reading throughout Germany and Austria.

Therefore, even though we often mistrust (with some reason) the self-evaluations of authors and composers, the fact that Hofmannsthal believed the libretto of *Die ägyptische Helena* to be the best he had produced should make us take a close look at it. The ambivalent response to this work as an operatic text is not recent; as James Miller points out, there is some uncertainty about its quality, particularly in terms of its adaptability to music. But as Bryan Gilliam aptly notes, the libretto has a rather peculiar genesis. What started out to be an effort at comedy turned during the course of its development into something quite different—something penetrating and psychologically resonant. *Die ägyptische Helena* is indeed a serious reflection on love, marriage, and forgiveness. Its subject matter, presented in a deceptively simple mythological vehicle, connects it within the operatic repertoire to everything from *Figaro* to Alban Berg's *Lulu*. Hofmannsthal's decision to give the actions of the original story's phantom Helen to the opera's "real" Helen transformed the potential for comedy and a farcical dynamic between stage and audience into an opportunity to surpass mere romance and allow for the complexities and contradictions of love, sexuality, and marriage.

Contrary to popular opinion and instinct, these issues are not universal categories. True, they seem to plague every culture and generation, but they do so in quite different ways. For the turn-of-the-century generation of Strauss (1864–1949) and Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), idealized notions of the feminine from both early Romanticism and the Christian conception of marriage were compromised by the work of two seminal figures whose influence cast a long and permanent shadow over European thought and culture: Richard Wagner and Sigmund Freud. Wagner, himself no paragon of marital fidelity, put on stage a narcotic mixture of music, poetry, and drama that revealed to his middle-class audiences the inherent tragedy in the tension between the pursuit of true love and the constraints of everyday life, including human nature. If Søren Kierkegaard understood the Christian notion of love and marriage to be a terrifying stricture through which an individual could display true faith in the sense of self-denial and psychic transformation, Wagner's work suggested another alternative. The pursuit of the standard moral and ethical claims of mainstream contemporary Christian thought—which demanded love of family, hard work, and fidelity from the civilized European—suddenly appeared to be a sacrifice without any redeeming features whatsoever, let alone salvation. His *Tristan und Isolde* celebrates not only the tribulations

of intense passion, but the idea that its experience is preferable to the failure of experiencing it—preferable over death after a life without it. Wagnerian music and drama created a world of fantasy to which Europeans, trapped in the drab routines of respectable middle-class life, flocked. Wagner created an avenue of escape from the mundane into an arena of the heroic and the ecstatic, a space where individuals might realize the latent power of their own emotions and imaginations. This is in part why Friedrich Nietzsche, Europe's most articulate foe of Christianity, initially embraced Wagner—for he saw the composer as an apostle of an art that could transform modern Europe and cause it to cast off the shackles of Christian morality and connect itself once again to the sense of human power and passion celebrated by the ancient Greeks.

With the writings of Freud (especially his *Interpretation of Dreams*, which found its way into the media of literature, music, and painting), the traditional Christian denial of the sexual underpinnings of human behavior—the erotic and the Dionysian—was exposed and discredited in the eyes of the European literary public. What Max Weber called *Entzauberung*—the demagification, as it were, of Western culture—reached its peak before 1914, suppressing both superstition and the hold of religion over the lives of modern, urban, European citizens. In this new context, the conventional claims and obligations of marriage, from the process of courtship to the raising of children, seemed to collapse from their own obsolescence. Marriage rites, portrayed by Freud as dependent on the darkest sublimations of the human psyche, could be viewed as an act of hypocrisy, counteracting the true nature of humans and extracting a toll of self-denial and deception that seemed ultimately destructive. The figure of the bohemian flourished as bourgeois fantasy. In today's parlance, the utopia of “family values” holds little allure and plausibility. Cultural critics at the turn of the century argued that Europe was in the grip of a degenerate aesthetic, subverting all that modernity had sought to achieve in terms of civility, science, and societal progress. Nietzsche and Wagner, the heroes of the young, were seen as the chief culprits.

This fundamental reassessment of values influenced the making of art in which an explosive interest in human psychology and sexuality came to play a central role. Both Hofmannsthal and Strauss were keenly aware of how difficult it was in their own age to draw upon the traditions of artistic expression founded by the late 18th-century and early 19th-century masters—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Mozart, for example. Hofmannsthal made his early reputation while still a teenager as one of the most compelling lyric talents to write in German, but by the early 1900s, he experienced a profound crisis in which he came to the conclusion that the concept of language and poetry with which he had begun was no longer relevant to his own time. Strauss, the son of a great horn player, grew up with a youthful enthusiasm for the sort of music his father favored. A precocious young man, he wrote in the conservative traditions we associate with Johannes Brahms, Robert Schumann, and Felix Mendelssohn. Like Hofmannsthal, Strauss too had an intense personal crisis, linked to an intense love affair with someone of whom his family did not approve. But personal and artistic transformation were synonymous for both artists. In Strauss's case, his discovery of Wagner led to self-reinvention as a composer. A conservative now turned radical, he dazzled the world with his series of orchestral tone poems. After two failed attempts at both comic opera and tragic musical drama imitative of Wagner, Strauss encountered sensational success with his operatic settings of Oscar Wilde's *Salome* and Hofmannsthal's modernization of *Elektra*. These subjects certainly had special resonance for a public obsessed with sexual psychology and intricate relationships. By the end of the 20th century's first decade, both Strauss and Hofmannsthal were at the peak of their powers and had begun their long collaboration, of which *Die ägyptische Helena* is the last fully completed product.

Yet here is where Strauss's own story gets intricate. Despite his fascination with Wagner, Strauss was to his dying day not in accord with the fashions of the fin de siècle. For one thing, his true lifelong musical god was not Wagner at all, but Mozart. For another, in apparent contradiction with his *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Don Juan*, and *Salome*, Strauss, like Brahms, was thoroughly comfortable with the very middle-class lifestyle that was so under siege among his fellow artists, writers, and thinkers. His greatest passion was card playing, and his personality seemed so commonplace that Gustav Mahler, after hearing *Salome*, is reputed to have remarked how inconceivable it was that someone so ordinary and bourgeois—so interested in simple material comforts—could write such astonishing, fresh, and brilliant music. Strauss was no bohemian; he fashioned his life not only on the model of Brahms but also of Joseph Haydn: he considered himself the ultimate, highly disciplined craftsman.

Beneath the veneer of bourgeois ambition, egotism, and simplicity, there was in Richard Strauss a profound capacity for insight into the very contradictions and conflicts in values that characterized the modern human being and his culture. In this sense, Strauss did not indulge in the rebellion of the fin de siècle. With his marriage to Pauline de Ahna (whom Strauss immortalized—not necessarily to her liking—in his autobiographical opera *Intermezzo*, with a libretto he wrote himself against Hofmannsthal's advice), he entered into an obligation akin to Kierkegaard's conception of marriage. His wife, once a great soprano, proved over time to be notoriously difficult, petty, and demanding. There is a famous anecdote associated with the premiere of *Die ägyptische Helena* that recounts how, when Strauss was trying to demonstrate a certain passage to the conductor Fritz Busch, Pauline kept disrupting the rehearsal by meddling onstage with the singers and their costumes. Strauss finally ceased conducting and, in the pregnant silence that followed, pronounced with characteristic irony the final line of *Salome*: "Kill that woman!" Nevertheless, unlike most of his contemporaries, Strauss saw in the self-discipline of martial fidelity and loyalty not the death of creativity but its source. In the decade following the premiere of *Die ägyptische Helena*, Berg set Frank Wedekind's character of Lulu to music. Berg was supposedly the beneficiary of an ideal marriage, but as scholarship has since revealed, he had an intense and longstanding affair with the sister of Franz Werfel. No research, however, is likely to uncover any infidelity on Strauss's part. The very nature of the vacuous bourgeois family served Strauss as an environment in which a human being might reach his fullest powers of imagination and find the best possibilities for inspiration. The dialectic between the ordinary and the extraordinary was, for Strauss, the dialectic between mundane living and art. One did not miss the few opportunities to transcend the ordinary through art by squandering them on an artistic lifestyle. Strauss's self-imposed discipline in his own private life created a wide interior expanse from which a profound recognition of human everyday suffering and desire could flow forth in music.

Hofmannsthal was therefore an ideal partner for Strauss. His command of language and deep respect for literary classicism were powerfully augmented by an unusual musical sensibility. In contrast to some observations, it can be said that few writers of that generation were possessed of as much connection to musical culture as Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Beginning with *Der Rosenkavalier*, their most famous and commercially successful collaboration, the two men wrote a whole series of operas about love, loyalty, and marriage. But as a result of these operas, Strauss, the composer of *Salome* and *Elektra*, was accused of reversing his musical development and becoming a conservative. *Der Rosenkavalier*'s success appeared to vindicate its status as a manifesto against modernism. For most of the century, the rest of Strauss's output, particularly between the years 1914 and 1945, was considered highly competent but not comparable to his earlier successes. He acquired the reputation of being a gifted composer who had peaked early and lived too long. *Arabella*, with a libretto which Hofmannsthal was never able to revise, became successful only as an echo of *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Today's listener, however, should view the standard account and critical assessment of Strauss's output with a hefty dose of skepticism. For when Strauss became the bête noir of all advocates of 20th-century musical modernism (whether they were disciples of Igor Stravinsky or Arnold Schoenberg), he still remained the only apostle of tonality and the Romantic gesture from whom one could not withhold respect. He hung around for the first half of the century like *Macbeth's* ghost of Banquo, a painful reminder of a guilty conscience. Yet Strauss made his own pact with the devil by participating actively with and allowing himself to be used by the Nazis. While he was certainly not a rabid ideologue—his greatest motivations were his own venality and comfort as well as a desire to take revenge on all his contemporaries who dismissed him—there is no way to defend his association with the Nazis. Strauss, who could render human frailty more compellingly than anyone, who rarely camouflaged the ambivalences and contradictions of human behavior and self-presentation, must not be rationalized by his biography. This aspect of Strauss's life is relevant in part because modernist theorists such as Theodor Adorno have tried to link Strauss's allegiance to the musical language he employed in *Die ägyptische Helena* with an aesthetic credo which was itself ethically compromised as a logical partner of fascism and oppression. This ideological linkage of aesthetic modernism and progressive anti-fascist politics itself needs to also be treated with skepticism, not so much to defend Strauss but instead to explain why composers like Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Walter Braunfels, and Marcel Rubin—victims, émigrés, and, in some cases, political progressives—shared Strauss's adherence to tonality and his rejection of radical modernism. Not every musical modernist was a progressive, and not every adherent to 19th-century musical Romanticism was a fascist.

Since Strauss's death, critical reassessment of his work has progressed much too slowly. There are some among us who have argued (without great acceptance) that Strauss's work from the 1920s to the 1930s, particularly *Die ägyptische Helena*, is a high point in his artistic career. His choice of musical language enhances not only the subject matter but also Hofmannsthal's verbal language. The filigree-like delicacy and complexity of Strauss's orchestration and voice-writing always reveal the Mozart in him. *Die ägyptische Helena* is not simply a curiosity or an interesting (if flawed) work by a great composer; rather, it is the kind of masterpiece that needed a future generation to discover it and assign it to its proper place in the mutable canon of artistic acceptance.

The opera, to Strauss's dismay, never succeeded after its 1918 premiere. The fact that it has seemed static to some perhaps reveals a reductive expectation of dramatic action. Strauss always urged conductors of his operas to take great care when dealing with the massive orchestration not to sacrifice the clarity of the sung words. As Mozart and particularly Wagner made evident, music's greatest moment in combination with text is its capacity to augment and express inner thoughts that may not correspond to the spoken word, and in fact may occur in opposition to explicit expression: The interplay of music and words mirror the ongoing internal dialogue that constitutes our complex and ambivalent psychologies. On the operatic stage, thinking without action becomes representable in a way that radically extends the possibilities of conventional theater. In this sense, a Strauss opera of the 1920s is comparable to reading one of the great turn-of-the-century psychological novels—one by Henry James, perhaps—in which the real events often occur as internal perceptions, invisible to the external spectator but profoundly consequential.

Finally, in his mature years, Strauss achieved a synthesis of seemingly contradictory styles. His music reflects the same intense ability to transform and develop material that we so highly value not only in Mozart and Brahms but in Wagner and Berg as well. To a 1920s public mesmerized and scandalized by modernism and aesthetic radicalism and obsessed with the irrational, Strauss

offered a contribution of his own, which indicates how much he ultimately ran against the grain of his time by being keenly aware of it. He abandoned all need to follow fashion, but sought—through the operation and musical traditions he so cherished—to compel his listeners to confront the possibilities and consequences of their own autobiographical struggles. He urged them to find individuality and creativity not in a perpetual sequential search to recover the excesses of new desire, romance, and fulfillment, but instead to accept the challenge that mortality and morality offer us: to love, to marry, to live productively in a necessarily limited world, and yet still to transform loneliness, suffering, and disappointment into occasions for self-recognition, wisdom, and the discovery of otherwise unimaginable beauty. Hofmannsthal was right: Not only does *Die ägyptische Helena* possess his finest libretto but it also offers the vehicle for one of Strauss's most intensely introspective and alluring artistic statements. In *Die ägyptische Helena*, we encounter the genuine modern heir to Mozart—a composer who enables us, with the help of a great librettist, to experience our own human frailties and sufferings without dilution, using the archetypes of musical theater and mythology. We should emerge from *Die ägyptische Helena* a bit more reflective about our own lives for that experience—just as Helena and Menelaus shed their mythic status, confront their past in a clear-eyed manner, and renew their will to live and love without facile illusions.

—Leon Botstein

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

To say it right away, *Die ägyptische Helena* does not have a conventional opera plot. Logic and rationality seem almost deliberately suspended in this delightfully enigmatic story. The key to making sense of this opera may actually be to stop trying to grasp it intellectually and instead allow it to unfold as an emotional and psychological journey. Whether intended or not, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss seem to have written the first “surrealistic” opera in music history.

Seen through this lens, the piece unfolds like a Freudian dream in which the true meanings of the characters' intentions and actions lie hidden from themselves beneath an entertainingly surreal and occasionally absurd surface. It thus makes perfect sense that the plot features a singing, mind-reading seashell; mischievous elves; the ghost of its character Paris; mysterious Egyptian rulers and warriors; debauched love slaves; and, first and foremost, the mythical couple Helena and Menelaus, the world's most beautiful and desired woman and her jealous, vengeful husband—an archetypal incarnation of romantic conflict from mythical times through today.

Though Helena lends her name to the opera's title, it is Aithra who drives the story—like the director of her own dream. Step by step, we enter Aithra's psychological “dream factory,” where we encounter her after she is abandoned by her lover Poseidon at the beginning of the opera. She calls herself a sorceress yet remains powerless against the torment of neglected love, which she tries to cure with her drug of choice: the lotus juice.

It is this same potion that she administers to Helena and Menelaus after they unexpectedly enter her realm and make themselves at home—not unlike two movie stars on a film set. Aithra is fascinated by Helena, who seems to possess everything she aspires to have: beauty, fame, and

being the object of universal desire. She identifies with her to such an extent that she invents a twisted plot to save Helena and Menelaus's marriage—projecting her own conflict onto them.

Like a magical psychotherapist turned “director,” Aithra casts her alter ego in a dream sequence, set in a fantastical Egypt: a kind of ancient couples' retreat, seemingly far removed from the troubles of the past. According to Aithra's “script,” Menelaus is led to believe that the Helena he had just wanted to kill for her adultery with Paris was merely a sinful avatar, while the true Helena had been kept in innocent sleep in Egypt as her husband stirred up the Trojan War.

But soon after Helena and Menelaus awake in Egypt—following their drug-induced reconciliation—their problems return, only under a different guise: Helena now attracts the desire of all the Egyptian men, led by the seductive ruler Altair and his son Da-ud, who appear as reincarnations of Menelaus's former rival, Paris. Egypt is clearly not a real place, but is instead a state of mind—a realm of the subconscious shaped by desire and longing.

In *Die ägyptische Helena*, Hofmannsthal and Strauss hold up a mirror to the audience: Aithra, Helena, and Menelaus are not distant mythological figures but instead profoundly modern human beings who are driven by desire, vanity, ambition, and jealousy, and caught in emotional and moral contradictions. Even though their actions may at times seem ridiculous or irrational, they ultimately long for emotional recognition, fulfillment, and love—just like all of us.

It is fascinating how this opera constantly oscillates between comedy and existential drama, both musically and theatrically. It is fascinating, too, that this is so accurately the case in our own lives, where the tragic is contained within the comic, and vice versa. The opera is a musical exploration of the mystery of the couple—and it feels strikingly modern in that it implies no moral judgment. Perhaps the most profound relationship is not that between Helena and Menelaus, but between Aithra and Helena. They are bound by a deep emotional bond that goes far beyond female solidarity or friendship—but they must ultimately let each other go.

This opera suggests the love the artist has for their creation, and for art itself—a love that contains the illusion of a dream: overwhelmingly intense and achingly ephemeral. It is this shimmering mystery that Strauss makes us experience in the final passage of his music.

—Christian Rätz

SCHOLAR'S NOTE

Written for Richard Strauss's *Die ägyptische Helena*, a concert performed on January 18, 1998, at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall

“What could be more serious than married life?” Richard Strauss once remarked about his *Symphonia domestica* (1904). “Marriage is the most profound event in life and the spiritual joy of such a union is heightened by the arrival of a child.” On the surface, the remark appears to be a defense of his domestic symphony, which was maligned by a press that saw the sacred art of music desecrated in a celebration of everyday family life. But Strauss was, in fact, quite serious.

His preoccupation with marriage and fidelity, with domestic relationships, formed a continuous theme throughout his life's work, and it established a significant bond between him and his librettist of nearly three decades, Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

Hofmannsthal was quick to remind Strauss of this motif in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, when the composer began to lose interest in a project he saw as too stylized. "What *Ariadne* is about," he wrote Strauss, "is one of the straightforward and stupendous problems of life: fidelity; whether to hold fast to that which is lost, to cling to it even in death—or to live, to live on, to get over with it, to transform oneself." This vital theme would again be explored in greater depth in his next mythological opera, *Die ägyptische Helena* (1928), a work that, in fact, completes a trilogy of operas on the subject of marriage, begun first with *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which explores domestic relationships on metaphysical and human levels, followed by the autobiographical *Intermezzo* (text by Strauss), which uses the topic of fidelity as material for a lighthearted bourgeois comedy.

Poet and composer were in full agreement that after the weighty *Die Frau ohne Schatten* they needed to collaborate on something lighter, something—as Strauss explained—devoid of "Wagnerian musical armor." The composer, encouraged by his comic *Intermezzo*, declared (somewhat facetiously) his desire to become the "[Jacques] Offenbach of the 20th century," and Hofmannsthal, eager to lure him away from Wagnerian "erotic screaming," suggested a mythological operetta based on the story of Helen of Troy. The poet envisioned a lighter orchestra, one without the dense leitmotiv treatment so apparent in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and Strauss was largely successful in shifting more focus to the voices. *Die ägyptische Helena* was their first and only bel canto work (Helen being one of Strauss's greatest soprano roles), and from the very outset, even as Hofmannsthal began devising scenarios, the poet had particular singers in mind: Maria Jeritza, Richard Tauber, and Alfred Jerger.

But *Die ägyptische Helena*—especially in its more complex, symbolic second act—would prove to be a work somewhat removed from the delicate, lighter world of Offenbach's *La belle Hélène*. There are, to be sure, marvelous satirical touches in Act 1: an omniscient, singing shell; mischievous elves; and the like. But things take a more profound turn by the second curtain, when Hofmannsthal brings into focus themes so central to his other libretti: memory, marital fidelity, and the restoration of trust. Like *Ariadne*, Helen gives herself to death (risking her life by offering her husband, Menelaus, the potion of remembrance), and in doing so she is transformed and transforms her husband, for the jealous Menelaus is finally able to resolve the good and bad in Helen (and himself). Reborn, he accepts her: "Ever same, ever new."

What links such great Hofmannsthal libretti as *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and *Die ägyptische Helena* is that critical moment when the title role takes a potentially fatal risk and is thereby forever changed. "Transformation is the life of life itself," Hofmannsthal declared, "the real mystery of nature as creative force. Permanence is numbness and death. Whoever wants to live must surpass himself, must transform himself: he has to forget. And yet all human merit is linked with permanence, unforgetfulness, constancy." This is life's great enigma, a paradox explored with great poignancy in what Hofmannsthal declared to be his finest libretto, his last completed opera text for Strauss.

—Bryan Gilliam, Duke University

WHO'S WHO

DIRECTION



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Leon Botstein (Conductor) is artistic codirector of Bard SummerScape and the Bard Music Festival, founder and music director of The Orchestra Now (TÖN), music director and principal conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra (ASO), and conductor laureate and principal guest conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra (JSO), where he served as music director from 2003 to 2011. He has been guest conductor with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Mariinsky Theatre, Russian National Orchestra in Moscow, Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden, Taipei Symphony, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, and Sinfónica Juvenil de Caracas in Venezuela, among others. In May 2025, he led two concerts with TÖN in Koblenz and Nuremberg, Germany, marking 80 years since the surrender of Nazi Germany. With the ASO, he has revived numerous neglected operas and rare repertoire, such as Arnold Schoenberg's massive *Gurre-Lieder*; Richard Strauss's early operas, *Guntram* and *Feuersnot*; and the United States premiere of Sergei Taneyev's final work, *At the Reading of a Psalm*.

Albums include *The Lost Generation* and *Exodus*, two 2024 releases with TÖN; Strauss's *Die ägyptische Helena* and *Die Liebe der Danae* and Paul Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* with the ASO; a Grammy-nominated recording of Gavriil Nikolayevich Popov's First Symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra; and other recordings with TÖN, ASO, the London Philharmonic, NDR Orchestra Hamburg, and JSO, among others. Fall 2025 releases include *Premieres* with violinist Gil Shaham and *Transcription as Translation*, both with TÖN. He is editor of *The Musical Quarterly* and author of numerous articles and books, including *The Compleat Brahms* (Norton), *Jefferson's Children* (Doubleday), *Judentum und Modernität* (Böhlau), and *Von Beethoven zu Berg* (Zsolnay). Honors include Harvard University's prestigious Centennial Award; the American Academy of Arts and Letters award; and Cross of Honor, First Class, from the government of Austria, for his contributions to music. Other distinctions include the Bruckner Society's Julio Kilenyi Medal of Honor for his interpretations of that composer's music, Leonard Bernstein Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, and Carnegie Foundation's Academic Leadership Award. In 2011, he was inducted into the American Philosophical Society.



Christian Răth (Director/Designer) is a native of Hamburg whose work takes him to many of the world's leading opera houses. He directs a large and varied repertoire, ranging from Wagner, Strauss, Janáček, Puccini, Verdi, Donizetti, Mozart, Britten, and Bartók to musicals and contemporary creations.

Recent new productions include the direction and design for the world premiere of Hosokawa's *Natasha* at the New National Theater, Tokyo; *Le prophète*, *Die schweigsame Frau*, and *Das Wunder der Heliane* at Bard SummerScape; *Der Freischütz* and Verdi's *Macbeth*

at the Wiener Staatsoper; *Le Baron Tzigane* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève; *L'italiana in Algeri* in Portland; *Iolanta* for the Dallas and Gothenburg Operas; and Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* for the Haut école de musique de Genève. In September this year, his production of *Tristan und Isolde* (created for the Dallas Opera) will be presented in Taipei.

Other work includes the direction and design of Verdi's *Un giorno di regno* (*King for a Day*) for the Glimmerglass Festival, *Falstaff* at Washington National Opera, *Roméo et Juliette* at Houston Grand Opera, *Fidelio* and *Luisa Miller* at the Dallas Opera, *Die Zauberflöte* at Cairo Opera House, and *Carmen* at the Grand Théâtre de Genève.

Räth has also conceived and directed several unique historical events in Egypt, including *The Pharaoh's Golden Parade*—celebrating the journey of 22 royal mummies through the city of Cairo—and the opening ceremony of the antique “Sphinx Road” at Luxor.

CAST



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Hailey Clark (Helena) is an award-winning operatic soprano who continues to garner praise on the international stage for her signature character portrayals as well as her versatility in operatic and concert repertoire spanning nearly three centuries. Recent highlights include Nedda (*Pagliacci*) at San Diego Opera; Fifth Maid / Overseer (*Elektra*) at Dresdner Philharmonie; Freia (*Das Rheingold*) at the Bayreuth Festival; Alcina and Rachel (*La Juive*) at Staatsoper Hannover; Countess Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) at Palm Beach Opera; and Magna Peccatrix (Mahler's Symphony No. 8) at the Royal Concertgebouw

Orchestra with Klaus Mäkelä, recently released on Decca Classics. She has also appeared at the Oper Stuttgart, Theater Basel, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Alte Oper Frankfurt, the Santa Fe Opera, and Florida Grand Opera, and is an assistant professor of voice at Vanderbilt University.



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John Matthew Myers (Menelaus) returned to the Opéra National de Paris this season, reprising his portrayal of Mao in *Nixon in China* alongside Thomas Hampson and Renée Fleming. He sang Florestan in *Fidelio* at Deutsche Oper am Rhein and the Prince in Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges* at Semperoper Dresden. On the concert stage, he joined the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and conductor Manfred Honeck, the Houston Symphony and conductor Patrick Dupré Quigley, and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for Handel's *Messiah*. Last season, Myers joined Evgeny Kissin in recital at Carnegie Hall alongside Sasha Cooke and Susanna Phillips in

Shostakovich's *From Jewish Folk Poetry*, and returned to Carnegie Hall soon after to join the American Symphony Orchestra in the title role of Strauss's *Guntram* in concert. Other orchestral collaborations included appearances with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, Grant Park Music Festival, Oregon Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic. In concert, he sang Iopas in Berlioz's *Les Troyens* at Seattle Opera with Ludovic Morlot as well as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with the Richmond Symphony under Valentina

Peleggi. With the Opera Carlo Felice Genova, he debuted as Midas in Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* under Fabio Luisi, as well as the Tenor/Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Opernhaus Zürich conducted by Markus Poschner in a new production by Andreas Homoki. During the summer, he joined SummerScape's 2025 opera in the title role of Smetana's *Dalibor* to critical acclaim, returning later in the summer for Martinů's *The Epic of Gilgamesh* at the Bard Music Festival.



©Jenny Anderson

Cecilia "Cece" Popp (Hermione) is excited and honored to be performing in her first opera role at Bard SummerScape. Popp made her Broadway debut in 2024 as Tommy (Age 4) in Des McAnuff and Pete Townshend's *The Who's Tommy*. In 2025, she appeared at the Public Theater in *Glass. Kill. What If If Only. Imp.*, a series of plays by Caryl Churchill. Popp is grateful to Christian Rāth and Bard College for this incredible opportunity; her voice teacher, Amelia DeMayo; Kim Pedell at Zoom Talent; David Doan at CESD Talent; her loving family and friends; and her wonderful dog, Beta. Find her on Instagram at @ceciliapopp.



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Keya Upadhyaya (Hermione) is a 12-year-old vocalist who has been passionate about singing since the age of five. Currently a student in the Precollege program at the Manhattan School of Music, she blends a classical foundation with contemporary versatility. Her favorite stage experience thus far was performing as the Cat in the Hat. With a love for classical, opera, and musical theater, Upadhyaya is dedicated to growing as a young artist and sharing her joy of music with audiences. Outside of music, Upadhyaya is a dedicated sister to her older and younger brothers. She is deeply grateful to her parents for their constant support through years of lessons, and she looks forward to pursuing future roles in musical theater and opera.



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Jana McIntyre (Aithra) is a George and Nora London Foundation Award Winner and a finalist in the Metropolitan Opera's Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. In the 2025–26 season, she made her debut with Detroit Opera in *The Handmaid's Tale* (Janine/Ofwarren) and returned to San Francisco Opera for *Parsifal* (Flower Maiden). On the concert stage, she debuted with the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra in Mahler's Symphony No. 2.

In the 2024–25 season, McIntyre debuted at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Tytania) and returned to Opera Santa Barbara in *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Marie).

She also made her Los Angeles Philharmonic debut in Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, with performances in Los Angeles, New York City, and Bogotá. Additional orchestral highlights include her debut with the New York Philharmonic in Boulez's *Pli selon pli: Improvisations sur Mallarmé I and II* (conducted by David Robertson).



©Daniel Welch

Blake Denson (Altair), hailed as a “roaring baritone” (*Klassik begeistert*) with “a striking upper register” and “a sound that booms to the back of the house” (*OperaWire*), is rapidly establishing himself on major international stages. In 2025–26, Denson returned to Houston Grand Opera as Crown in Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*, debuted with the Minnesota Orchestra in Brahms’s *Requiem*, reprised the role of Ford in *Falstaff* with Pittsburgh Opera, and returned to the Opéra national de Paris as Tomaso in *Un ballo in maschera*.

In the 2024–25 season, he portrayed Il Conte di Monterone in *Rigoletto* with the Opéra national de Paris, the Metropolitan Opera, and Los Angeles Opera. He also performed in Weill’s *The Seven Deadly Sins* with the New World Symphony, following his debut of the work with Wolf Trap Opera Company.

Recent performances include Blanchard’s *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera, Ford in *Falstaff* with Houston Grand Opera, and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with the National Symphony Orchestra. He has also appeared with the Santa Fe Opera and in concert with Lisette Oropesa at New Orleans Opera.

A graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Denson sang roles in *Carmen*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, and the world premiere of Joel Thompson and Andrea Davis Pinkney’s *The Snowy Day*. He is a winner of the Richard Tucker Music Foundation’s Sara Tucker Study Grant, the George and Nora London Foundation for Singers Competition, and the Tenor Viñas Competition, and was a grand finalist in the Metropolitan Opera’s 2020 Laffont Competition. He holds degrees from Rice University and the University of Kentucky.



Shawn Roth (Da-Ud) is a recent graduate of the Butler Studio at Houston Grand Opera, where his roles over the past two seasons have included Il venditore di canzonette in *Il tabarro*, Curley in Floyd’s *Of Mice and Men*, and Heinrich der Schreiber in *Tannhäuser*. Outside of Houston, he also made his New York solo recital debut with the Wagner Society of New York (WSNY) after winning first prize in the 2024 WSNY Singers Competition.

Next season sees Roth in a variety of roles in Munich, including First Armoured Man in *Die Zauberflöte*, Third Squire in *Parsifal*, the High Priest of Neptune in *Idomeneo*, and Brühlmann in Massenet’s *Werther* under the baton of Karina Canellakis.

Roth is a winner of the Marilyn Horne Song Competition and a two-time district winner of the Metropolitan Opera’s Laffont Competition. An alumnus of Oberlin Conservatory and the Academy of Vocal Arts, Roth is also a three-time fellow of the Music Academy of the West.



Catherine Creed (First Servant of Aithra) graduated this May with her master's from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in the studio of Nova Thomas. Creed was recently named a winner of the Metropolitan Opera's Laffont Competition (Houston District) and received an Encouragement Award at the Premiere Opera Foundation International Vocal Competition. Recent roles include Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, the cover of Sœur Constance in *Dialogues des Carmélites* at Wolf Trap Opera Company, Nannetta in *Falstaff*, and Florestine in *The Ghosts of Versailles* at Rice University. She earned her bachelor's from the Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Nicole Cabell and sang many roles including Zerbinetta in the prologue of

Ariadne auf Naxos; was the soprano soloist in Poulenc's *Gloria* with the Eastman Philharmonia; and was the first prize winner of the Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition, judged by Christine Goerke.



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Deborah Nansteel (Omniscient Seashell; Second Servant of Aithra) is a mezzo-soprano poised for international stardom, having already performed at almost all the leading opera companies in the United States. This season brought Nansteel's return to the Metropolitan Opera as Teresa in *La sonnambula*; a house debut with Minnesota Opera for the world premiere of B.E. Boykin and Harrison David River's *My Name is Florence*; Mrs. Miller in Douglas J. Cuomo and John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt* for Opera Parallèle; a return to North Carolina Opera to sing her acclaimed Azucena in *Il trovatore*; and Giovanna in *Rigoletto* with Baltimore Symphony. On the concert stage, she will debut at the San Juan Symphony as a featured soloist in Elgar's *The Music Makers* and return to the Kalamazoo Symphony for Mahler's Symphony No. 3.

In the 2024–25 season, Nansteel created the role of civil rights icon Fannie Lou Hamer in White Snake Projects' world premiere of *Is This America?* She also joined Chicago Opera Theater to sing the role of civil rights pioneer Jo Ann Robinson in the world premiere of Jasmine Barnes and Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton's *She Who Dared*. In addition, Nansteel made her house debut with Opera Colorado as Azucena in *Il trovatore*, returned to Dayton Opera as Amneris in *Aida*, and returned to the Glimmerglass Festival to perform Baba in *The Rake's Progress* and Mama Cordero in the world premiere of Derek Bermel and Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*.

MUSIC



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James Bagwell (Chorus Master) is principal conductor of both the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra and Berkshire Bach orchestra and chorus. Additionally, he is associate conductor and academic director of The Orchestra Now (TÖN) and was appointed principal guest conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra in 2009. Bagwell has readied numerous choral performances for the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the American Symphony Orchestra. His choruses have been heard in prestigious music festivals around the world—including the

Salzburg, Verbier, and Mostly Mozart Festivals—and, for 20 years, the Bard Music Festival. As guest conductor, he has appeared with major orchestras around the country, including the National, San Francisco, Cincinnati, and Atlanta Symphonies. Bagwell is a professor of music at Bard College as well as the director of performance studies and codirector of the Graduate Conducting Program at the Bard College Conservatory of Music.



©Matt Dine

Zachary Schwartzman (Assistant Conductor) has conducted across the United States and in Brazil, England, Bosnia, and Mexico. His orchestral performances have been featured on NPR, including a national broadcast on *Performance Today*. A recipient of the career development grant from the Bruno Walter Memorial Foundation, he has served as assistant conductor for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opera Atelier (Toronto), Berkshire Opera, Opéra Français de New York, L'Ensemble orchestral de Paris, Gotham Chamber Opera, Oakland Symphony, Connecticut Grand Opera, and Opera Omaha, among others. He was associate conductor for two seasons with New York City Opera, as well as conductor in their VOX showcases,

and has been associate/assistant conductor for 15 productions at the Glimmerglass Festival, where he conducted performances of *Carmen* and the world premiere of Jeanine Tesori's *A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck*. He recently conducted Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*, Nino Rota's *I due timidi*, and Britten's *Turn of the Screw* for Juilliard's Vocal Arts Program. Schwartzman's credits as assistant conductor include recordings for Albany Records, Bridge Records, Naxos Records, Hyperion Records, and a Grammy-nominated world premiere recording for Chandos Records. He has been assistant conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra since 2012 and has appeared as both an assistant conductor and conductor at Bard SummerScape and the Bard Music Festival. He is currently resident conductor of The Orchestra Now (TÖN) and music director of the Bard College Community Orchestra. In addition to degrees in piano performance and orchestral conducting, he earned a BA in East Asian studies from Oberlin College.

Nils Neubert (Dramaturg / Diction Coach), DMA, was born and raised in Hamburg, Germany, and is active as a performer, language and interpretation coach, educator, scholar, and administrator in the United States and abroad. He serves on the faculties of the Juilliard School and the Manhattan School of Music, and on the music staff of the Metropolitan Opera, where he also teaches for the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. He has frequently served as a language coach at the Music Academy of the West and has worked with the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Glimmerglass Festival, and the Wolf Trap Opera Company in that same capacity. Other recent projects include language preparation for *Musica Sacra* and the New York Philharmonic, the Oratorio Society of New York, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. He has published chapters, articles, translations, reviews, liner notes, and educational sound materials in musicology, music education, language diction, voice pedagogy, musical performance, interpretation, analysis, and exile studies with Bärenreiter, Brill Building Modern Copyrights, G. Henle Verlag, Nimbus Records, Oxford University Press, Rowman & Littlefield, *Journal of Singing*, *Music Education Research*, and the *Ralph Vaughan Williams Society Journal*. His dissertation on the song composer Max Kowalski (1882–1956) was nominated for the CUNY Graduate Center's Barry S. Brook Award, and he earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at the Juilliard School and Teachers College, Columbia University. In 2025, he completed a decade of service as a board

member, past officer, and past president (2022–24) of NATS-NYC. He resides in New York City with his wife, pianist Yuri Kim Neubert.

CREATIVE TEAM

Daniel Unger (Scenic Design), a Berlin resident, studied architecture in Stuttgart. He was an assistant for the Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg and Vienna's Burgtheater as well as at the Stuttgart State Theater, and has worked as a close associate of Katrin Nottrodt on various projects, including *Das Rheingold* at Staatsoper Berlin, and with Philipp Fürhofer on *Les Vêpres siciliennes* at Royal Opera House Covent Garden. Unger's own designs have been seen at Schlachthaus Theater Bern, Stuttgart State Theater, Deutsches Nationaltheater und Staatskapelle Weimar, Opernhaus Dortmund, and as part of *La Cenerentola*, a coproduction between Opéra National de Lyon and Oslo Opera House, which then toured to the Edinburgh International Festival, Teatro Real in Madrid, and the Royal Danish Opera. Unger previously worked at Bard SummerScape on *Das Wunder der Heliane* (2019), *Die schweigsame Frau* (2022), and *Le prophète* (2024).

Mattie Ullrich (Costume Design) is known for large-scale, character-driven designs that focus on rich storytelling, and has designed costumes for opera, theater, dance, and film at major national and international venues. Recently, Ullrich designed the internationally nominated opera *Natasha*, commissioned by the New National Theatre, Tokyo, and conceived by composer Toshio Hosokawa with a libretto by Yoko Tawada, and completed Wagner's *Ring Cycle* for the Atlanta Opera. At Bard SummerScape, her designs have been seen in *Les Huguenots*, Shrecker's *The Distant Sound*, Taneyev's *Oresteia*, *Die schweigsame Frau*, and *Le prophète*.

International opera credits include the Royal Opera House, Theater an der Wien, Royal Swedish Opera, the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, the Israeli Opera, Opéra de Montréal, and the Bolshoi Theatre. In the United States, she has designed for companies including LA Opera, San Francisco Opera, the Dallas Opera, the Atlanta Opera, and Washington National Opera. In New York City, Ullrich has designed costumes for companies including The New Group, Vineyard Theatre, Second Stage Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Classic Stage Company, Playwrights Horizons, New York Theatre Workshop, and MCC Theater. Born in California, Ullrich now lives in the Hudson Valley with her husband and daughter. For more information about Ullrich, visit mattieullrich.com.

Tyler Micoleau (Lighting Design) has designed the lighting for over 400 productions, including plays, opera, dance, movement theater, multimedia performance, and puppetry. Previous Bard SummerScape designs include *Love in the Wars* (2014) and *Demolishing Everything with Amazing Speed* (2016). His opera designs include *I due timidi*, *Suor Angelica*, *Cendrillon*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Macbeth*, and *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* for Manhattan School of Music; *Carmen* for OperaMaine; *The Lighthouse* for the Dallas Opera; *The Cunning Little Vixen* for the Curtis Institute of Music and Opera Philadelphia; and the American premiere of Wolfgang Rihm's *Proserpina* for the Spoleto Festival USA. His work is currently represented on Broadway with the musical *Buena Vista Social Club*. Micoleau is the recipient of a 2018 Tony Award for the musical *The Band's Visit*, a Knight of Illumination award, two Henry Hewes Design Awards, three off-Broadway Lucille Lortel Awards, two Obie Awards (including a 2010 Obie for Sustained Excellence), and two Drama Desk nominations. He has held visiting

artist positions at Yale University, Dartmouth College, and, for six years, served as adjunct faculty in the Sarah Lawrence College dance program.

Elaine J. McCarthy (Projection Design), over the course of her more than 30-year career, has contributed to 17 Broadway productions, most notably *Wicked*, *Spamalot*, *Assassins*, *Thurgood*, *Into the Woods*, and *Man of La Mancha*. Her work for the operatic stage includes productions for the Metropolitan Opera, the Dallas Opera, San Francisco Opera, the Santa Fe Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, LA Opera, Teatro alla Scala, London's Barbican Centre, St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, Madrid's Teatro Real, Calgary Opera, and State Opera South Australia, among many others. She has contributed to seven world premieres by Tan Dun, Jake Heggie, Jennifer Higdon, and Joby Talbot. Her work has also appeared frequently off Broadway, with her designs for Anna Deavere Smith's *Notes from the Field* earning Lucille Lortel, Drama Desk, IRNE, and Henry Hewes Design Award nominations. In 2020, her peers in the United States Institute for Theatre Technology honored her with a Distinguished Achievement Award in Digital Media for her body of work.

Brittany Rappise (Hair/Makeup Design)'s work as a freelance wig and makeup designer spans many mediums, including opera, theater, film, and editorial work. Born and raised in New Jersey, she is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts with her MFA in wig and makeup design. While most recently based in the Florida panhandle, she now spends most of the year on the road traveling to companies all over the country. Her work can regularly be seen on stage with Des Moines Metro Opera, Nashville Opera, Florida Grand Opera, OperaDelaware, Curtis Institute of Music, Knoxville Opera, Pensacola Opera, and more.

Rappise has been fortunate enough to build wigs and teach workshops for major entertainment companies including Disney Parks, Disney Cruise Line, Busch Gardens, and Six Flags. She also regularly teaches workshops and classes for theater companies and universities including the University of Alabama, University of West Florida, Long Island University, and Brevard Music Center, among others. Her most recent design credits include *Tosca*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *King Roger* at Des Moines Metro Opera; *Andrea Chénier* with Opera Delaware; and *Carmen* at Piedmont Opera. Rappise is very much looking forward to her first design for Bard SummerScape and to a busy 2026–27 season, starting with *William Tell* at Boston Lyric Opera and *Don Giovanni* at OperaDelaware. Please visit brittanyrappise.com, and find her on Instagram at [@makeupwigstress](https://www.instagram.com/makeupwigstress).

Lynn Krynicki (Production Stage Manager) is currently enjoying her twenty-second consecutive season as production stage manager for Bard SummerScape's opera and her fourth for Bard Music Festival's opera. The rest of her year is spent freelancing for various companies—most notably Nouveau Productions and American Pops Orchestra, where she show calls filmed concerts for PBS, award shows, galas, and other live events. She continues to show call for Washington Concert Opera, Madison Opera, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, TeamPeople, Architex, Triciapedia, and Atlantic Council. From 2000 to 2022, she worked at Washington National Opera (WNO)—the last seven years of which as production stage manager. Her favorite stage managing credits at WNO were *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* in its first *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Other notable show calling credits include PBS's New Year's Eve concerts (2020–22), the *Latino Inaugural 2013: In Performance at the Kennedy Center* celebration of then-President Barack Obama; the world premiere of *Everlasting Faint* at Madison Opera; and *The Picture of*

Dorian Gray (North American premiere) at Florentine Opera. She has also worked with Central City Opera, Opera Grand Rapids, Seattle Opera, Nashville Opera, Chautauqua Opera Company, and Des Moines Metro Opera, among others. When not working in live performing arts, she is the president of River Silks LTD, a wholesaler of silk ribbon for the needle arts; a member of IATSE Local 772 Wardrobe Union; and an avid contra and English country dancer.

Laurie Feldman (Assistant Stage Director) has been a guest director at the Metropolitan Opera since 1991 and was a member of the directing staff at San Francisco Opera for 22 years. Deeply committed to the development of young artists, she has taught and mentored singers through programs including the Atkins Young Artists Program at the Mariinsky Theatre, iSing! International Young Artists Festival, Royal College of Music in London, and Merola Opera Program in San Francisco, and she currently serves as guest lecturer at the Tianjin Juilliard School. Feldman's international work has brought her to many of the world's leading opera houses and festivals, including the Wiener Staatsoper; Bayerische Staatsoper; Teatro Real in Madrid; Teatro Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; Teatro Massimo di Palermo; Teatro Regio Torino; Opéra National de Lyon; Opéra national du Rhin in Strasbourg; Opéra de Nice; Théâtre royal de La Monnaie in Bruxelles; New National Theatre, Tokyo; Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival; National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing; Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia; Copenhagen Opera; the Dallas Opera; and the Santa Fe Opera. Feldman has worked with a number of prominent directors, including Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, Robert Carsen, Laurent Pelly, Nikolaus Lehnhoff, Herbert Wernecke, John Copley, Cesare Lievi, Otto Schenk, Michael Hampe, and August Everding.

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) was founded in 1962 by Leopold Stokowski with the mission of providing great music for everyone. Leon Botstein expanded that focus when he joined the ASO as music director in 1992 by creating concerts that explore music through the lens of the visual arts, literature, religion, and history, as well as by reviving rarely performed works that audiences would otherwise never hear performed live.

ASO's signature programming includes its Vanguard Series, which features concerts of seldom-performed orchestral repertoire presented at Carnegie Hall, Bryant Park, and other historic venues, and its Chamber Series—curated by ASO's musicians—offering concert programs dedicated to reflecting the diverse perspectives of American culture. During the summer, ASO is the orchestra in residence at Bard's SummerScape and performs at the Bard Music Festival. All of ASO's presentations comprise a year-round series of vital and innovative programming for audiences of all backgrounds.

As part of its commitment to expanding the standard orchestral repertoire and ensuring accessibility to musical masterpieces, ASO offers free streaming of exclusive live recordings on its digital platform, ASO Online. Content includes SummerScape operas, chamber performances, and short films. In many cases, these are the only existing recordings of some of the forgotten works that have been restored through ASO performances.

For more information, please visit americansymphony.org.

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Leon Botstein, *Music Director*

VIOLIN I

Cyrus Beroukhim,
Concertmaster
Yukie Handa
Ragga Petursdottir
Patricia Davis
John Connelly
Akiko Hosoi
Alisa Wyrick
Ming Yang
Samuel Katz
Francisco Salazar

VIOLIN II

Richard Rood, *Principal*
Wende Namkung
Naho Parrini
Bruno Peña
Joel Lambdin
Kathryn Aldous
Margarita Milkis
Fatima Aaziza

VIOLA

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Sally Shumway
Rachel Riggs
Debra Shufelt-Dine
Adria Benjamin
David Blinn

CELLO

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Annabelle Hoffman
Sarah Carter
Anik Oulianine
Theo Zimmerman
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Jack Wenger
Louis Bruno

Stephen Sas
Milad Daniari

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Piccolo
John Romeri

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Erin Gustafson, *English horn*
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Ki-Deok Park, *Bass clarinet*
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Kelli O'Connor, *Banda*

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Joshua Butcher
Shelley Monroe

HORN

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Judy Lee
Kyle Hoyt
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Sara Cyrus
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Aaron Korn, *Banda*

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Matthew Gasiorowski

Zachary Silberschlag
Andy Kemp
Thomas Verchot
Sean Alexander
Chris Bubolz, *Banda*
Michael Sinicropi, *Banda*

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Mark Broschinsky
Christopher Olness, *Bass
trombone*
Karl Lyden, *Banda*
Declan Wilcox, *Banda*

TUBA

Kyle Turner, *Principal*

TIMPANI

David Fein, *Principal*
Grace Sprecher, *Banda*

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Violetta Norrie

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FISHER CENTER PERFORMING ARTS LAB

A new building designed by Maya Lin

Situated in meadows to the west of its landmark Frank Gehry–designed Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts and overlooking woodlands and the Catskill Mountains, a new 23,500-square-foot studio building now expands Bard College's cultural campus, housing rehearsal and teaching facilities and providing a creative home for artists at all stages of their careers—including students from Bard's undergraduate Dance Program and Theater & Performance Program. The Performing Arts Lab, opening this fall, will also serve as the base for Fisher Center LAB, the center's acclaimed residency and commissioning program for professional artists.

Fisher Center LAB

Since its launch in 2012, Fisher Center LAB has supported residencies, workshops, and performances for hundreds of artists, incubating new projects and engaging audiences, students, faculty, and staff in the process of creating contemporary performance. Productions developed by Fisher Center LAB, such as Tony Award–winning *Illinoise* and a reimagined version of *Oklahoma!*, often premiere in the annual Bard SummerScape festival and frequently tour nationally and internationally. Last year, Fisher Center LAB received a milestone gift from the Civis Foundation to establish the Civis Hope Commissions. The gift creates an endowed commissioning fund that will support, in perpetuity, the development and production of new major works in the performing arts that explore the subject of hope.

For more information on Fisher Center LAB or to pledge your support, please contact Alessandra Larson, director of institutional advancement and strategy, Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, at 845-758-7990 or alarson@bard.edu.

For over two decades, the Fisher Center at Bard has created exceptional performing arts experiences that challenge and inspire. We thank the following donors for joining our founders, including the late Richard B. Fisher, with their generosity and partnership.

Special thanks to those who have supported our programs with their commitments to the Bard College Endowment Challenge. Thank you for ensuring Bard's continuity as a beacon for higher education, bolstering the development of innovative programs that offer access to rigorous, high-quality education for new populations around the world.

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Jordan Au, *Stitcher*
Wilbur Flynn Banasik, *Dresser*
Sabrina Barton, *Stitcher*
Ayelet Book, *Crafts Artisan*
Leo Bunger, *Stitcher*
Pia Cárdenas '26, *Dresser*
Kat Collins, *Assistant Wardrobe Supervisor*, *Suddenly Last Summer*
Al Eburne '28, *Dresser*
Devin Zain Elliott, *Dresser*
Bell Hansen, *First Hand*
Juno Jacobs, *Crafts Artisan*
Uvenka Jean-Baptiste, *Assistant Wardrobe Supervisor*, *Lucinda Childs Dance and The Egyptian Helen*
Zane Kealey, *Costume Shop Foreperson*
Fatima Lyda, *First Hand*
Josie Madzik, *Dresser*
Imani Oluch VAP '26, *Dresser*
Vivi Potee '26, *Costume Shop Assistant*
Kira Kristianne Ricarte, *Stitcher*
Vinny Rossi, *Dresser / Wardrobe Supervisor*, *Suddenly Last Summer*
Wanda Shaffer, *Wardrobe Supervisor*, *Lucinda Childs Dance and The Egyptian Helen*
Ally Jack Starishevsky, *Crafts Artisan*
Tyler Swartz, *First Hand*
Rex Tans, *Dresser*
Jaclyn Vela-Olsen, *Dresser*
Theo Watson Ley, *Dresser*
Nicole "Nico" Weaver, *Dresser*
Catherine York, *Dresser*

Hair and Makeup

Nat Carlson, *Makeup Artist*,
Suddenly Last Summer
Matia Emsellem, *Hair and Makeup Supervisor*, *Suddenly Last Summer*
Elaya Gass, *Makeup Artist*, *The Egyptian Helen*
Bryan Gonzalez, *Hair Stylist*, *The Egyptian Helen*
Isaac Grnya, *Hair and Makeup Supervisor*, *The Egyptian Helen*
Christina Jacobs, *Hair Stylist*, *The Egyptian Helen*

Elise "Rosae" Rosa, *Hair and Makeup Artist*, The Egyptian Helen
Luanda Sentmanat Blanco, *Hair and Makeup Artist*, The Egyptian Helen

Lighting

Ivy Comery, *Head Electrician*, Suddenly Last Summer
Madison Dillon, *Lighting Assistant*, *Spiegeltent*
Harry Enriquez, *Electrician*
Anna Heath '27, *Electrician*
Avery Hudgins '26, *Electrician*
Conor Kimlicko, *Electrician*
Dalyn Kvapil, *Light Board Programmer*, *Lucinda Childs Dance and The Egyptian Helen*
Yichun Li, *Electrician*, *FollowSpot Caller*
Catcher Reeves, *Electrician*
Max Rosenfeld, *Light Board Programmer*, *Suddenly Last Summer*
Alisa Saisakorn, *Electrician*
toby santoro, *Electrician*
Emma E. Smith, *Electrician*
Conor Thiele, *Festival Head Electrician*
Andrew Wilmot, *Electrician*

Production and Stage Management

Hannah Ackerman, *Intern*
Nikki Alday, *Production Management Assistant*
Lilly E. Cadow GCP '22, *Senior Festival Coordinator and Assistant Chorus Master*
Jon Collazo, *BMF Special Events*
Patricia Garvey, *Assistant Stage Manager*, The Egyptian Helen
Hila Gotlieb, *Intern*
Taryn Greenwood, *Assistant Orchestra Stage Manager*
Laura Hirschberg, *Production Stage Manager*, *Spiegeltent*

Tracy D. Hofmann, *Assistant Stage Manager*, The Egyptian Helen
Lauren Krohn, *Livestream Stage Manager*, The Egyptian Helen
Lynn Krynicki, *Production Stage Manager*, The Egyptian Helen
Yichun Li, *Assistant Stage Manager*, *BMF*
Maya Liu, *Production Assistant*, The Egyptian Helen
Roscoe McDonald, *Production Management Assistant*, *BMF*
Ana Muñoz, *Assistant Stage Manager*, *Spiegeltent*
Abbey Murray-Stark, *Assistant Stage Manager*, The Egyptian Helen
Robert Strickstein, *Assistant Production Manager*, *BMF*
Matthew Thomas Strieder '21, *Production Management Assistant*, *BMF*
Tic Treitler, *Intern*
Ellie Van Houten, *Production Assistant*, The Egyptian Helen
Piper Vaught, *Associate Production Manager*

Props

Nicholas Bernard, *Assistant Supervisor*
Jharrel Liam Bernardo, *Artisan*
Elizabeth Elliott, *Artisan*
Emma Jordan, *Artisan*
Elizabeth "Lizzy" Soglin, *Artisan*

Orchestra

Angel Ruiz Araujo '27, *Stagehand*
Moises Arteaga '27, *Stagehand*
Piper Holley, *Stagehand*
Beitong Liu '24 MA '25, *Stagehand*
Kainani Iara Nitz '30, *Stagehand*
Dennis O'Keefe IAP '27, *Stagehand*
Nathaniel Valsania IAP '27, *Stagehand*
Alison J. Wall, *Stagehand*
Lana Zaki '28, *Stagehand*

Scenic

Luiza Braga, *Stagehand/Carpenter*
Margo Buchanan, *Stagehand/Carpenter*
Thomas Butler, *Stagehand/Carpenter*
Emma Covert, *Lead Carpenter*
Daisy Taysom, *Lead Carpenter*
Artemis Doyle, *Stagehand/Carpenter*
Alden Girsch, *Stagehand/Carpenter*
Jonathan Jensen, *Lead Carpenter*
John Macy '28, *Carpenter*
Eli McKenna, *Assistant Technical Director*, *Suddenly Last Summer*
Judus Mckinny, *Stagehand/Carpenter*
Mike Murphy, *Carpenter*
Fiona O'Halloran '26, *Carpenter*
Cameron Rhode, *Assistant Technical Director*, The Egyptian Helen
Benjamin Sexton, *Stagehand/Carpenter*
Ross Werner Winslow '25, *Stagehand/Carpenter*

Video

KB Ballay, *Assistant Video Engineer*
Marcus Cox '28, *Video Technician*
Lily Isaacson, *Video Technician*
John McCall Jr., *Assistant Video Engineer*
Doaa Ouf, *WATCHOUT Programmer*, The Egyptian Helen
Ashur Rayis, *Video Supervisor*, *Lucinda Childs Dance and The Egyptian Helen*
Mila Rybtsova '26, *Video Technician*
Xavier Vassallo, *Video Engineer*
Ke Xu, *WATCHOUT Programmer*, *Suddenly Last Summer*
Arrien Zinghini, *Video Engineer*

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR BARD COLLEGE IN ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON

Developed in Cooperation with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community

In the spirit of truth and equity, it is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are gathered on the sacred homelands of the Munsee and Muhheaconneok people, who are the original stewards of this land. Today, due to forced removal, the community resides in Northeast Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We honor and pay respect to their ancestors, past and present, as well as to future generations, and we recognize their continuing presence in their homelands. We understand that our acknowledgment requires those of us who are settlers to recognize our own place in and responsibilities toward addressing inequity, and that this ongoing and challenging work requires that we commit to real engagement with the Munsee and Mohican communities to build an inclusive and equitable space for all. For more information about the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, please visit mohican.com.

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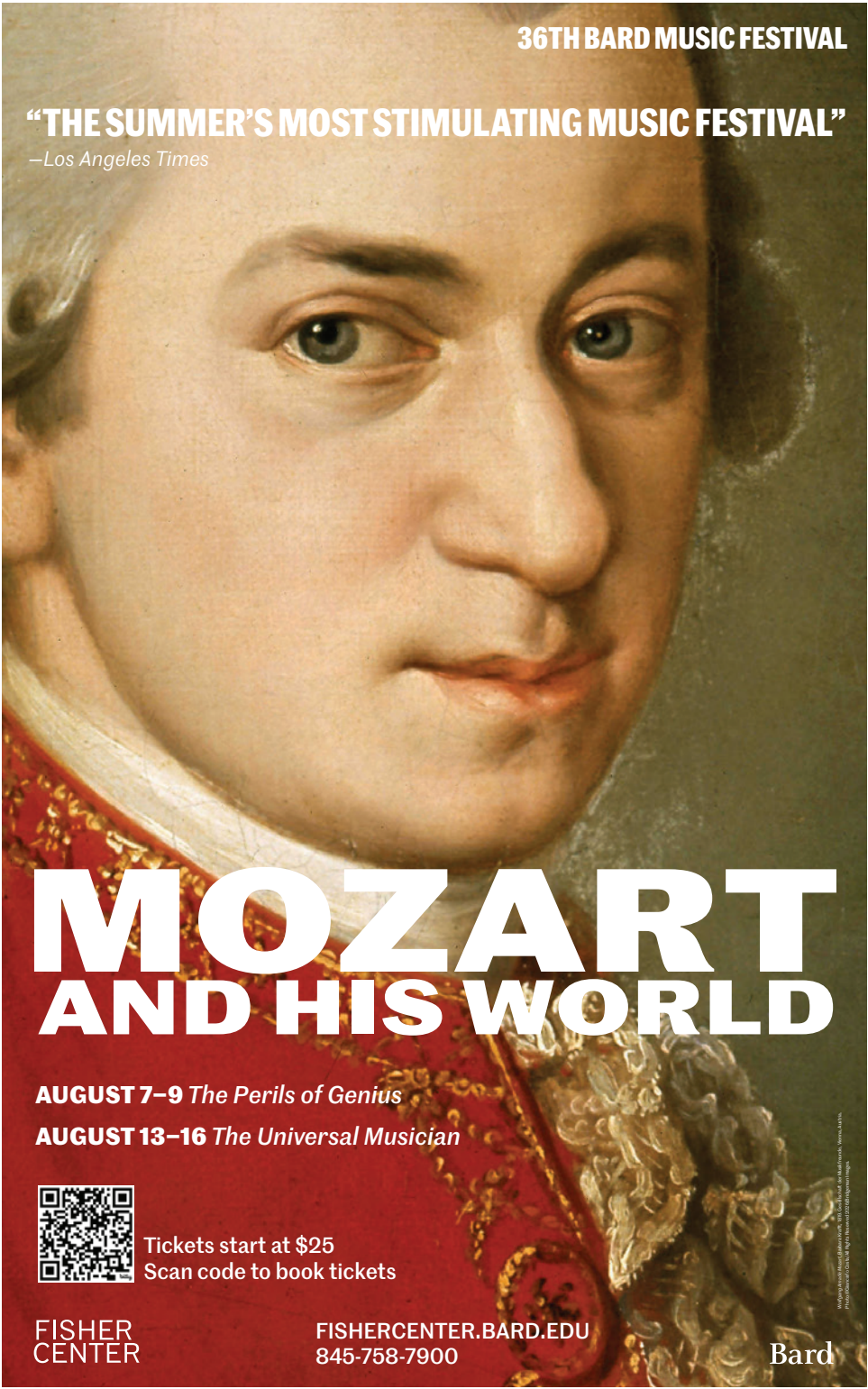
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A close-up portrait of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, showing his face and upper torso. He is wearing a red coat with gold embroidery and a white cravat. The background is a dark, textured green.

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