

CARMEN

Vive la Liberté!

Bizet, Mérimée, Cantrelle



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OPUS CONCERT THEATRE

PRESENTS A CONCERT VERSION OF

BIZET, MÉRIMÉE AND CANTRELLE

CARMEN

Vive La Liberté

JUNE 11 & 18, 2017

NARRATOR **Kevin Crysler**
CONDUCTOR/CONCERT PIANIST **Douglas Brandt Byerly**
CHORUS MAESTRA/CONCERT PIANIST **Nonna Kaler-Slutsky**

CARMEN **Diana Cantrelle**
DON JOSÉ **Joseph Regan**
MICAÉLA **Melissa Chavéz**
ESCAMILLO (TOREADOR) **Albert Nidel**
FRASQUITA **Simone Brown**
MERCÉDÈS **Rachael Poneranz**
EL REMENDADO **David Artz**
LE DANÇAÏRE **Gregory Scott Stuart**

ENSEMBLE: **Soldiers, cigarette factory girls, Escamillo's fans, gypsies, people of Seville, police, and bullfighters.**

SOPRANOS **Shanna Balman, Section Leader, Frasquita Cover**
Elena Patricia Wenderoth
Valerie D Smith
Emily Zimmer

ALTOS **Ginny Morgan Arey, Section Leader, Mercedes Cover**
Ellen Ehrenreich
Amanda Leining, Manuelita

TENORS **Michael Wu, El Remendado Cover**
Leroy Smith, Le Dançaïre Cover
Inge Hyder
Benjamin Walker

BASSES **Clark Pickett, Section Leader**
Les Gesell
David Smith, Assistant Stage Manager
Jered Wenderoth, Assistant Stage Manager

STAGE MANAGER **Dr. Anne Ballenger**
SOUND ENGINEER **Chris Horn**
VIDEOGRAPHER **Ron Israel**

A word from our Artistic Director

Welcome to Opus Concert Theatre's second season, as we proudly present *Carmen: Vive la Liberté* ©2017. You are witnessing the birth of a new work. I have always loved the opera *Carmen*, and feel it is one of the best ever written. George Bizet's music combined with Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy's libretto based on Prosper Mérimée's novella make for a compelling story of a free spirited woman, ahead of her time, living life by her own rules and the downfall of a young soldier—Don José. Being a dramatic mezzo-soprano, singing *Carmen* has been on my bucket list for years.

Part of Opus Concert Theatre's Mission is education—for the performers as well as for the audience. How does one make *Carmen* more accessible for all? The original production used spoken dialogue. We have returned to that dialogue format to honor the composer Bizet's original intent.

By editing the over three-hour opera down to less than two and translating the original French libretto into English spoken dialogue, I added a bit of my own flavor to create *Carmen: Vive La Liberté*. My wish is for the audience to love *Carmen* as much as I do, and to see that opera is a fantastic art form, worthy of our support.

For many of the Principal Artists, myself included, this is our first time singing the roles in *Carmen*. People who have dedicated their lives to music and the pursuit of beautiful polished perfection deserve a chance to develop their talents. Many members of the cast have never sung in French, so they are also stretching their wings, learning a new skill. Opus Concert Theatre is an inclusive place for artists to develop their craft.

Bizet's *Carmen* premiered with the Opéra-Comique in Paris on 3 March 1875. The response was not greeted with success. The mindset of the day could not handle such a scandalous production of an independent woman, who liked sex, had her own business, and refused to be intimidated. This depressed Bizet, he soon fell ill and died, never knowing the success of his amazing masterpiece.

Carmen: Vive la Liberté production today is a semi-staged concert version. Meaning, part of the show will be staged, and part sung, read on book. Pretend you are hearing a radio drama, where suddenly the action comes to life in your imagination. I hope you enjoy this labor of love!

I thank you with all my heart for coming to support Opus Concert Theatre—Giving Voice to Great Music!

~Diana Cantrelle

Synopsis

CARMEN

Vive La Liberté

BIZET, MÉRIMÉE AND CANTRELLE

Act 1

A Public Square in Seville. Time 1820s

Captain Zuniga Moralès and his soldiers loiter before the guard house, people watching. Micaëla appears looking for Don José, a corporal, but is told by Zuniga that he is not yet on duty. Why not wait with them in the guard house? She runs away saying that she will return later. Don José arrives for the changing of the guard.

Finally Carmen appears from the cigarette factory, and all the men ask her who will she love next? She replies, "Love is a rebellious bird that no one can tame. He has never known law. If you don't love me I love you, if I love you better take care!". They plead for her to choose her new lover from among them. Don José has been ignoring her. Carmen removes some flowers and throws them at him. José is intrigued by her wild behavior.

Micaëla returns and gives Don José a letter from his mother. José longs for home. In the letter he reads that his mother wants him to return and get married. Micaëla is embarrassed and leaves. Don José declares that he will honor his mother's wishes, and marry Micaëla.

Suddenly screams are heard from the factory. Don José and Zuniga find that Carmen has been fighting with Manuelita, cutting her face with a knife. Zuniga asks Carmen if she has anything to say, but she replies stubbornly only with a gypsy song.

Zuniga instructs José to guard her while he writes out the warrant for arrest. Carmen seduces José with a song about an evening she will spend with her new lover who is "only a corporal". José gives in and unties her hands.

Carmen escapes calling to José, "Meet me at Lillas Pastia's!" Zuniga returns, to a great surprise as the laughing cigarette girls & soldiers cheer Carmen's bold escape.

Act 2

Lillas Pastia's Tavern. Closing Time

One month later, Carmen and her friends Frasquita and Mercédès sing and dance for Zuniga and his officers. Zuniga tells Carmen that Don José, after being demoted for letting Carmen escape, has just been released from prison. Zuniga wants to return later, but Carmen advises him not to.

The sound of a procession hailing Escamillo, famous bullfighter, is heard. The toreador is invited inside the Inn. Escamillo sings and flirts with Carmen and her friends. He makes a bold invitation to Carmen, which she tells him that for the time being he must not even dream about being with her, but it is always agreeable to hope!

When everyone except Carmen, Frasquita and Mercédès have left, the smugglers Dancaïre and Remendado tell the girls of their plans to dispose of the contraband they have smuggled via Gibraltar. Carmen refuses to accompany them, because she is in love.

As José's voice is heard singing in the distance, Dancaïre tells Carmen she must try to get Don José to join them.

Carmen makes Don José jealous when she tells him that she danced for the officers. But his anger cools when Carmen dances and plays castanets for him alone. During her song the sound of bugles retreat is heard calling the soldiers back to camp.

Carmen's temper flairs when José says he must leave. But he soothes her anger by producing the flower she threw at him, which he kept while he was in prison. Carmen knows what must be done and says if he really loves her, he will join her gypsy life.

The picture of a life of freedom is tempting to José, who finally refuses saying it would be dishonorable to be a deserter. Don José begins to leave when Zuniga enters hoping to seduce Carmen. Don José draws his sword on his superior officer, but before they kill each other, the smugglers burst in and stop the fight. Zuniga is paid off and José has no choice but to escape with Carmen.

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*Intermission*

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Act 3

A Wild Mountain Pass - a few weeks later...

The smugglers along with Carmen and José are traveling with the contraband. Carmen has grown tired of José's possessiveness, and wanting her to fit into his idea of what a woman should be. Her world is really not for him. Don José has given up so much for Carmen, and is also tired of their constant fighting.

Carmen, Frasquita and Mercédès foretell their futures in the cards: Mercédès sees love and romance. Frasquita sees wealth and luxury. But Carmen's cards foretell death for both her and Don José.

Dancaïre and Remendado ask the girls to do their jobs by charming the customs officers. Their dangerous journey continues, leaving the jealous José to guard the goods.

Micaëla arrives seeking José. She must tell José that his mother wishes to forgive him. He must come with her. But Micaëla is afraid, and prays to G-d for courage and protection.

Suddenly she sees José firing a gun, and hides in the rocks. Escamillo emerges. At first, José welcomes him. Not realizing who José is, Escamillo says he is in love with Carmen and tells José the story of her affair with a soldier.

José challenges Escamillo to a knife-fight, but Escamillo is sparring with him, infuriating José. They start again and José is at the mercy of Escamillo. Stopping, the Toreador says his trade is killing bulls, not men. The third time they fight Escamillo's knife breaks, but he is saved by the return of Carmen and the Smugglers. Escamillo invites everyone to his next bullfight in Seville.

Remendado finds Micaëla hiding, and she tells José that his mother must see him. Carmen encourages José to go! At first he refuses, knowing Carmen will leave him for the bullfighter the minute he leaves. Until Micaëla tells José that his mother is dying. Vowing to return to Carmen,

Don José goes. As he is leaving, Escamillo's voice is heard singing in the distance.

Act 4

Public Square in Seville at the Entrance of the Arena

Zuniga, our guide, tells of this exciting day of the contest! Everyone is there, the square is full of people looking their best, merchants selling their wares.

Frasquita and Mercédès are among the crowd and the women tell Zuniga that Carmen is now with Escamillo. The crowd and children sing and cheer on the procession as the Toreador and his entourage arrive. Greeted by the crowds, Carmen and Escamillo profess their love. Carmen says, "I have never loved any one so much as you, Escamillo."

After Escamillo goes into the Arena, Frasquita & Mercédès warn Carmen that José is in the crowd. Carmen refuses to let José make her cower in fear. She will talk to him.

Desperately, José pleads with Carmen to return his love, to start a new life with him.

Carmen simply replies that she no longer loves him and will not lie — "free I was born and free I will die".

Cheers are heard from the bullfight as Carmen tries to enter, but José will not let her pass. He asks her one last time to please save him. Carmen has had enough and angrily throws back the ring that Don José gave to her.

The dances of death, continue both in the Arena and with Carmen & Don José ...

—Diana Cantrelle
13 May 2017

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*Fin*

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Who's Who



Douglas Brandt Byerly, (Conductor/Concert Pianist) As a music director, Doug has worked with professional, community and academic companies in productions of opera, operetta and musical theater (over 100 productions to date). He has over 30 years of classroom experience, having taught elementary, middle school, high school (including music magnet and arts schools) and college. Doug is a Professor of Music at Anne Arundel Community College, where he is Director of Choirs and Voice and the Artistic Director of OPERA AACC. In addition to teaching at AACC, he is the Director

of Music at St. John the Evangelist Church in Hydes, and the former Director of Music for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Doug serves on the Board of Trustees for the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, and is a past board member of Annapolis Opera. He holds his Master of Music from the Peabody Conservatory of Music and a Bachelor of Music from Western Michigan University. Doug lives in Towson, Maryland with his beautiful wife, Christine, his two awesome children Adam & Emma, and his quirky cocker spaniels, Molly & Sophie.

Nonna Kaler-Slutsky, (Ensemble Maestra/Concert Pianist) the musician of multiple fields is a pianist, conductor, teacher, singer, and narrator. She is also founder/artistic director of the concert series "East-West Musicales" ("EWM") and the "New Opera Theater with puppets" (2009). With over 40 years of performing and teaching experience, Mrs. Kaler-Slutsky founded "Piano Performance School of Music" in 1993. As a professor of the piano performance and as an accompanist, she worked at the Peabody Conservatory of JHU, Baltimore School for the Arts, UMBS, CCBC. For the past 8 years, Mrs. Kaler-Slutsky has hosted, performed, and narrated more than 100 concerts. The guests of the series "EWM" were all distinguished musicians well recognized in U.S. as well as abroad. Nonna Kaler-Slutsky immigrated from Moscow, Russia in 1991 where she graduated with DMA/MM from The Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory and with BM from The State Gnessin College of Music in Moscow, performed at some of the best venues in Russia.



Joseph Regan, (Don José) Joseph Regan is a successful singer and voice teacher based in the Mid-Atlantic region making appearances throughout the east coast. A regular performer at the Strathmore, Meyerhoff, and Kennedy Center Concert Halls, Mr. Regan has been privileged to sing under the batons of Marin Alsop, Christian Eschenbach, Masaaki Suzuki, Emil de Cou, Martin Issep, and many others. Joseph can be seen on the opera stage where he has performed the roles of Fenton from Verdi's *Falstaff*, Tamino from *Mozart's Magic Flute*, Jenik from Smetana's *Bartered Bride* and many more. Mr. Regan is also an accomplished performer of musical theatre. His credits include: Henrik

Who's Who

in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, Nicely-Nicely Johnson from Loesser's *Guys and Dolls*, and has performed a number of cabaret and recital programs dedicated to the style. In addition to his work in opera and musical theatre, Mr. Regan is well known for his work in the field of oratorio. He has sung Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Rossini, and is particularly notable for his expertise singing Bach. He has performed the St. John Passion solos on multiple occasions and has performed more than a dozen of Bach's Cantatas. Mr. Regan is also a highly sought after ensemble singer and sings regularly with top choral groups in the region, with whom he has toured much of the Eastern seaboard. Joseph is currently Assistant Professor of Music at Bowie State University.



Diana Cantrelle, MM, (Carmen) is at home in opera, oratorio, TV and film. Critical reviews say, "her deep rich voice gives new meaning to the words and her roles have vibrant vocal color & style." Her interpretation of French repertoire, Verdi and Oratorio provides, "high points to performances where she shows delicate vocal warmth as well as her acting talent." "...she is a smart choice with her ability to give emotional depth to the opera's score."

Ms. Cantrelle has performed at the: Hippodrome Theatre, Vocalypse Productions in Nova Scotia, Canada; Wolf Trap; Peabody Opera Theatre; Kennedy Center;

Washington Savoyards; L'Alliance Française; Divertimento Orchestra in Canada; Silesian Theatre in the Czech Republic; Cincinnati Opera; Capitol Opera; Townsend Opera Players, Elysium, German Tour; Pittsburgh Undercroft Opera; and Opera Santa Barbara. Some favorite roles are: Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*; Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*; Azucena in *Il Trovatore*; Suzuki in *Madame Butterfly*; Charlotte in *Werther*; Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*; Mother in *Amahl & the Night Visitors*; Baba (Madame Flora) in *The Medium*; Adalgisa in *Norma*; Rusty the Pirate in *All that Glitters*; and Ino/Juno in *Semele*. In 2012, Ms Cantrelle created a new children's opera *Le Chat Botté* (Puss in Boots) based on the original Charles Perrault beloved fable, with a New Orleans Jazz twist. Learn more by visiting: www.puss-and-boots.com She studies composition with Judah Adashi and is a recipient of a Peabody Career Development Grant. Ms Cantrelle studies voice with International Soprano Carmen Balthrop and coaches with Susan Morton, Michael Adcock, Ju Young Lee, International Baritones François Loup and William Sharp. Diana Cantrelle studies acting with John Astin, Roger Brunyate, and Garnett Bruce. She earned a Masters of Music in Voice Performance/Vocal Pedagogy with Composition Studies from Peabody Conservatory of Music in 2012.

Kevin Crysler, M.B.A. (Narrator) is the president of Opus Concert Theatre. Previously, he had an extensive career as an actor, director, designer and producer in opera, theatre, television and film. He has narrated concerts for the Atlanta Opera and The Atlanta Symphony, and was the preview lecturer for Opera Pacific in Orange County California for nine years. He has taught acting for singers



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in the MFA program at Cal State Long Beach and has taught opera appreciation courses at University of California, Irvine and Saddleback College. He is currently the owner of Mr. Handyman in Anne Arundel County and a resident of Columbia.



Melissa Jean Chavéz, (Micaëla, soprano) is pleased to make her debut with Opus Concert Theatre. Acclaimed by the Washington Post for her "voluptuous voice" and "cooly exemplary production," Ms. Chavéz regularly performs throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. Upcoming roles and performances include Mimi (*La Bohème*), Cendrillon (*Cendrillon*), Strauss Four Last Songs, as well as performances at Strathmore Mansion and Stillwaters Studios and other venues. Information about upcoming performances can be found at www.melissajeanchavez.com. Ms. Chavéz is a 2015 graduate of Shenandoah

Conservatory and an alumna of the Castleton Festival.

Mr. Albert Niedel, (Escamillo, Toreador) is a Lyric-Dramatic Verdi baritone who is a USA citizen born in Budapest Hungary. Mr. Niedel holds a Bachelor's of Arts from Bowie State University with academic Honors and Master of Arts/Music from Morgan State University. Albert Niedel is a winner of various competitions including NATS Advanced College, which consisted of participants from Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia and Pennsylvania as well as the Baltimore Music Club competition winner in professional vocal category. Most recently Albert Niedel was selected as the finalist for the Edward M. Murray Vocal Competition in Ithaca Opera Company NY. Over the years Mr. Niedel has served both as cantor at Jewish congregations and as opera singer performed with various opera companies in North America and Europe as well as worked with internationally acclaimed conductors and singers such as Christian Badea, Michel Plasson, Inessa Galante, Jason Stearns, Lois Alba and also featured in number of master classes by world-renowned singers like Wei Song, Sylvia Sass, Simon Estes and Madame Montserrat Caballe who personally invited and selected Mr. Niedel to participate in her final master class and Opera Gala concert in Zaragoza Spain in September of 2011. In addition, Mr. Niedel has been previously featured at the French and German embassy as well as performed a solo operatic recital at the State Department in Washington DC. Mr. Niedel was among selected guests to perform at the house of the President of Israel, Governor of Louisiana, Mayor of Long Island and others. Among some of his roles are Rigoletto, Onegin, Gianni Schicchi, Figaro in the *Barber of Seville*, Tonio and Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Amonsari in *Aida*, Count Di Luna in *IL Trovatore*, Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Gerard in *Andrea Chenier*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermmor*, Zurga in the *Pearl Fishers*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the villains in *Tales of Hoffman* and others. For more information please visit www.albertniedel.com



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Simone Brown, (Frasquita) is a second year Masters in Voice at Peabody Conservatory in the Studio of Denyce Graves. Ms Brown received her Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance *Magna cum laude* from Xavier University of Louisiana. In her time at Xavier Simone participated in both the Concert Choir and University Chorus as Soprano section leader and soloist. Simone Brown also participated in the Opera Workshop scene productions singing scenes from *The Medium*, *L'elisir D'amore* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Simone also sang the role of Laetitia in *The Old Maid and the Thief* by Gian Carlo Menotti. In her first year at Peabody Ms Brown participated in the Opera Outreach production of *Papageno!* singing the role of Pamina. Simone also participated in the Opera Etudes program singing the role of Yolanda in the short opera composed by Connor Elias Way *Meeting at the Fence*. In her second year at Peabody, Simone Brown sang the role of Barbarina in the spring production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*.



Rachel Pomeranz, (Mercédès) is a graduate of the University of Delaware, where she received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Vocal Performance. During her time at UD, she performed extensively with the University of Delaware Opera Theatre (UDOT), taught French Diction, and competed internationally with the UD Chorale. Some of her favorite roles with UDOT include Charlotte (*Werther*), Alma (*Little Women*), Frugola/Zita (*Il Trittico*), Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*), Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), and Edith (*The Pirates of Penzance*). She also participated in UDOT's opera scenes workshop as Romeo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*) and Meg (*Falstaff*). In addition to her roles with UDOT, Rachel appeared as Zweite Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* under the direction of Martin Katz (UD Master Players Concert Series), and Ingenue in the world premiere of a new opera, *Death and the Drifter* (Still Breathing—New Music Ensemble). In 2010, she spent a summer performing the role of l'Opinion publique (*Orphée aux enfers*) with the Franco-American Vocal Academy in Périgueux, France. Rachel resides with her husband in Delaware, where she serves as a cantor and alto section leader at St. Anthony of Padua Church, a play instructor at Gymboree Play and Music, and the enrollment manager for the Delaware Choral Academy. She would like to thank her parents and Bubbie for their years of unwavering support, her teachers and friends at UD for challenging and inspiring her, and Tristan—for proving to her that real love sets you free.

David Artz, (El Remendado) is a native of Oswego, NY and holds music degrees from Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music (BM) and Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins (MM). He currently lives in Baltimore. A "powerful" high lyric tenor with a "clear and passionate" extended range, David performs frequently with many regional companies in Maryland and DC including Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera Baltimore,



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Washington Concert Opera, and Baltimore Concert Opera. His budding career also includes prior and upcoming engagements with Civic Morning Musicals, Oswego Opera Company, Operafestival di Roma, Syracuse Opera Company, Syracuse University Opera Theatre, Accademia Europea dell'Opera, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Choral Arts Society, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Peabody Conservatory Opera Theatre, Singers' Theatre of Washington, Opera Delaware, Bel Cantanti Opera Company, the Young Victorian Theater Company, Opera AACC, the Silver Finch Arts Collective, and AIMS in Graz. David also frequently sings for the professional liturgical choirs of Washington National Cathedral, as well as the Cathedral's out-of-house choir series, "Cathedra."



Gregory Scott Stuart, (Le Dancaire) sings several opera roles each year in addition to engagements as a stage director, actor and church musician. He has sung numerous leading or supporting roles in operas with local and regional companies. A soloist in world premieres of Paul Leavitt's *Cantata Emmanuel*, his *Magnificat* and in premieres of his *Requiem* in Washington, Paris and at Lincoln Center, NYC and on CD, he has concertized with Symphony of Arlington and for the Society of the Cincinnati. As an actor, he played in the Helen Hayes nominated ensemble of *Optimism or Voltaire's Candide* at Spooky Action Theatre and has a slew of Shakespeare roles to his credit with Shakespeare Opera Theatre, Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, Three Rivers Shakespeare Festival, Seacoast Repertory Theatre, New England Shakespeare Festival; he has tread the boards at DC's Studio Theatre, and in musicals with Pittsburgh Playhouse, Bay Theatre & Ithaca Opera, including a national tour of *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. He directed the US premiere of a French musical, *Bigoudi*, several operas, world premieres of Phillip Freund's *Jocasta* and Sean Pflüger's opera *Children in the Mist*. He is the Manager of External Affairs for Vocal Arts DC. He teaches singing, theatre and yoga. Also this month, he sings Silvio in *I Pagliacci* and David in *L'amico Fritz* with Center Stage Opera in PA, then acts in two productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Later, he directs *The Tragedy of Madame Butterfly* for Loudoun Lyric Opera, where he serves on the board of directors.

Shanna Balman, (Section Leader, Frasquita Cover) holds a Master's degree in vocal performance from Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University. She is at home in many varied styles, performing at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, in Baltimore, Maryland, as a semi-finalist in the Billie Holiday Vocal Competition; with Dell'Arte Opera Company in New York City; and the West Virginia Symphony singing Ralph Vaughn Williams', *Serenade to Music*. She has also performed in master classes with famed baritone, Nathan Gunn and Pittsburgh Opera Company. In recent years, she has performed the roles of Gennariello from *Salvator Rosa*, Marchesa from *Un giorno di regno* and Zerlina from *Don Giovanni* in Philadelphia.



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Elena Patricia Wenderoth, (soprano) is a 14 year old girl at Wilde Lake Middle school. Eleana Wenderoth has been a part of many choirs and plays. In grades 4 and 5, she was in the Howard County Children Choir, and in grades 7 and 8, she was part of Howard County Gifted and Talented Choir. She has been in plays such as *Oliver*, in which she played the part of Nancy, and *Annie*, as the part of Miss Hannigan.



Valerie Smith, (soprano) and pianist has sung in church and secular choirs all her life.

Since moving to the United States from Canada in 1984, the highlights of her singing activities have included St. Andrews College Park Episcopal Church choir from 1984 to 1989, including a week as choir in residence at Westminster Abbey in August, 1985; the University of Maryland Chorus under Dr. Paul Trayver in collaboration with the Baltimore Symphony chorus in a production of Verdi's *Requiem* in 1992; and in 2016 sang in the chorus in

a production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with Opus Concert Theatre in Columbia. Ms. Smith continues to hone her singing skills as a regular student of Diana Cantrelle, and will sing soprano in the ensemble of Bizet's *Carmen: Vive La Liberté* this spring with Opus Concert Theatre. She is an active member of Encore Chorale in Columbia as well as her church choir at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Crownsville, Maryland.

Emily Zimmer, (soprano) is honored to be performing once again for the Opus Concert Theater. Last April she played the part of the Second Witch for the opera *Dido & Aeneas*. Emily is also a chorus member and soloist with Showtime Singers in Ellicott City. They perform throughout Maryland and every other year in Colonial Williamsburg. Emily has been performing since she was in 6th grade. In college, she performed in a variety of operas and ensembles. She completed the Peabody Preparatory Certificate as a high school student. In college, she performed in a variety of operas and ensembles. Emily is currently studying voice with Diana Cantrelle. She is thrilled to be singing the beautiful French lyrics of *Carmen* as a member of the ensemble.



Ginny Morgan Arey, (Section Leader, Mercedes cover)

Virginia Morgan Arey is a mezzo-soprano and music teacher in the Baltimore metro area. She received her undergraduate degree from Oberlin Conservatory and her master's degree from the American Kodaly Institute at Loyola University in Baltimore. She has performed with the Annapolis Opera, HUB Opera Ensemble and the Young Victorian Opera Company. She is the Alto section leader and soloist at the Church of the Good Shepherd

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in Ruxton and has sung with the Baltimore Choral Arts Society in the symphonic, full and chamber ensembles and has been featured as a soloist. Ginny lives in Sykesville with her husband, Jim and two children.

Ellen Ehrenrelch, (alto) Ellen is thrilled to be in the chorus of her second Opus Concert Theatre production! She enjoys singing in the alto section of Columbia Pro Cantare and taking voice lessons with Diana Cantrelle. Thanks to family and friends for their support, especially her loving husband, Mark!



Amanda B. Leininger, (Manuelita, alto) originally from Rochester, MN, currently resides in Baltimore, MD. A full-time nonprofit marketing and communications professional, she is thrilled to be part of her second production with Opus Concert Theatre, previously appearing in *Dido and Aeneas* in spring 2016. She holds a B.A. in psychology with a minor in theatre and a M.A. in communication from Johns Hopkins University. Her favorite roles in the theatre have included Pope Joan in *Top Girls*, Reuben's Wife in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*, Sonia (billed as Amanda)/choreographer in *Godspell* and dance captain in *Oklahoma*. She would like to thank her vocal coach Diana for always believing in and challenging her, Nonna for her patient help through rehearsals and the rest of the musicians, cast and crew for their commitment and dedication. Lastly, she would like to thank her family, friends and roommates for their ongoing support and tolerating her craziness and singing/humming these past few months.



Michael Wu, (El Remendado Cover) recently graduated *magna cum laude* with a B.A. in Voice Performance from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). A recipient of a full-tuition UMBC Premier Scholarship, he has performed with the UMBC Opera Workshop in scenes as Bill (*Hand of Bridge*), Colonel Fairfax (*The Yeoman of the Guard*), and Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*). Mr. Wu has also performed the role of Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) with the Little Patuxent Opera Institute, and returned to perform the role in the UMBC Opera Workshop's spring production. Mr. Wu currently studies under the direction of James Bailey, and looks forward to pursuing graduate studies in voice performance.

Leroy Smith's (tenor) Leroy's musical influences are just as diverse and dynamic as his repertoire. They include musicians like: Patti LaBelle, Leontyne Price, Luciano Pavarotti, Michael Jackson, Richard Smallwood, Johannes Brahms, Rogers and Hammerstein, Giuseppe Verdi, Keith



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Urban, and so many more. Leroy is known for his commitment to the lyrics, his dynamic range, and his ability to connect on an emotional level with all of his listeners. Leroy attended the Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg College from 2008 until 2012, where he studied with the renowned tenor Jeffery Fahnestock and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Voice. Currently, he is a student of Carol Westcott of the Voice Within Studio within Baltimore City. During his undergraduate career, Leroy sang the music of the composers/arrangers Brahms, Verdi, Schubert, Schumann, Bach, Handel, Haydn Massenet, Ellington, Blake, Bernstein, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Purcell, Burleigh, Hawkins, Smallwood, and more. Leroy played the roles of Goro and Prince Yamadori in Verdi's *Madama Butterfly*, Indio in Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and the Sailor in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Leroy served as the vocal coach for actors in Aishah Rahman's play *Unfinished Women Cry in No Man's Land* while a *Bird Dies in a Gilded Cage*.



Inge Hyder, (tenor) began singing practically non-stop since she met Bill, her husband-to-be, in the chorus of *The Mikado* at Queens College in New York in 1948. Many years later she and Bill were active members of the Comic Opera Company of Baltimore, putting on Gilbert & Sullivan operas annually for many years. Inge has also sung with the Handel Choir, the Baltimore Symphony Chorus, the Laurel Oratorio Society, the Columbia Choral Society, and the Columbia *Pro Cantare*. Presently she is a member of Encore Chorale, the UUCC (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia) choir, and the Bain/HCC chorus. She's enjoying being in a staged production again. She's a tenor, so you'll see her surrounded by tall men.

Benjamin Walker, (tenor) I'm a graduate from the University of Maryland at College Park, having received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theater. While in college, I performed with the Gamer Symphony Orchestra in the chorus, as well as the Kreativty Diversity Troupe, having worked as an actor, writer, and director in the group. My primary focus was on costume making, with my work having appeared in several plays and operas, including *La Bohème*, *Miss Havisham's Fire* and *Rent*, all of which were performed at the University of Maryland. I have sung with the opera Opus Concert Theatre once before



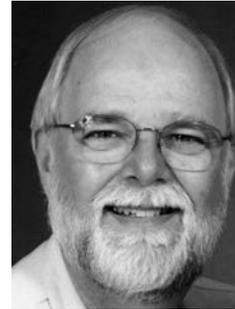
as well, having sung in the chorus for their performance of *Dido and Aeneas* last year. It is my dream to one day become a professional singer and songwriter, a goal I have been practicing to achieve since graduation. My primary influences in my singing style include the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, Freddy Mercury of Queen, and Chris Martin of Coldplay.



Les Gesell, (bass) in the *Carmen: Vive La Liberté* ensemble, has sung in a number of choruses of high quality. These include singing, as an undergraduate, in the Capital

Who's Who

University Chapel Choir. Mr. Gesell has recently sung with Columbia *Pro Cantare* Chamber Singers as well as in the full chorus. He currently sings with the Baltimore Choral Arts Society which frequently sings in concert with Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Gesell is currently taking voice lessons from Diana Cantrelle, as well as from James Bailey at Howard Community College.



Clark Pickett, (bass, Section Leader) Clark Pickett has been involved in musical activities practically since birth. He participated in both vocal and instrumental music activities from elementary through high school. He also played French horn in the Flint, MI Youth Symphony Orchestra for several years. He received a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal School Music from Michigan State University in 1971. Following college, he taught public school vocal music for one year, where he directed the choral portion of the school musical production of *Mame*. He then began a 42 year career with the Social Security

Administration in offices in Michigan, and, from 1986 until he retired in 2015, at SSA headquarters in Woodlawn. Since moving to the Baltimore area, he has sung in several musical groups. For 8 years, he sang in the Christian ensemble "*Joy and Devotion*." For the last 4 years, he has been a member of the Baltimore Choral Arts Society, where he has sung in the Symphonic Chorus, Full Chorus, and Chamber Chorus. Mr. Pickett also regularly sings in the choir and worship team at his church, as well as acting in a number of musical productions there over the years.



David Smith, (bass, Assistant Stage Manager) was an enthusiastic participant in choral singing and musical theatre through high school. He allowed life to intervene until recently, when he resumed singing in his church choir. *Dido and Aeneas* was his first foray into opera and now he enjoys singing in *Carmen*, *Vive La Liberté* and helping his fellow singers.



Jered Wenderoth, (bass, Assistant Stage Manager) is an amateur opera and work commute singer from Columbia, Maryland. He has been described as "one of the top four singers in the Wenderoth household." Mr. Wenderoth is performing in the bass section of the ensemble of the Opus Concert Theatre production of *Carmen: Vive la Liberté* in order to support and spend time with his musical prodigy daughter Elena. He previously performed in the Opus production of *Dido & Aeneas* also to support his amazing daughter and to be able to shock people with his claim of having performed in an opera. Jered has no other current productions in the works and no plans to go professional ever.

"I see where Elena get's her talent," says Ms. Cantrelle. "Jered has a beautiful, clear baritone voice!"

Who's Who



Anne M. Ballenger, PhD (stage manager) is an active Opus Concert Theater Board Member. She has been active in musical theater since 1980 and performed as actor/singer at the collegiate level under the direction of Michael Ellis-Tolaydo and Larry Vogt at St. Mary's College of Maryland. After earning her doctorate in anthropology from Catholic University of America in 2009 and opening a floral business, Ballenger Floral Design, in 2015, Dr. Ballenger has returned to her love of theater as stage manager for Opus Concert Theatre's productions.

Sally Stunkel, (Acting Coach) we offer a special note of gratitude.



About

Opus Concert Theatre

Opus Concert Theatre is a performing arts organization based in Columbia, Maryland. The mission of Opus Concert Theatre is to give voice to works of opera and musicals.

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Giving Voice to Great Music

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