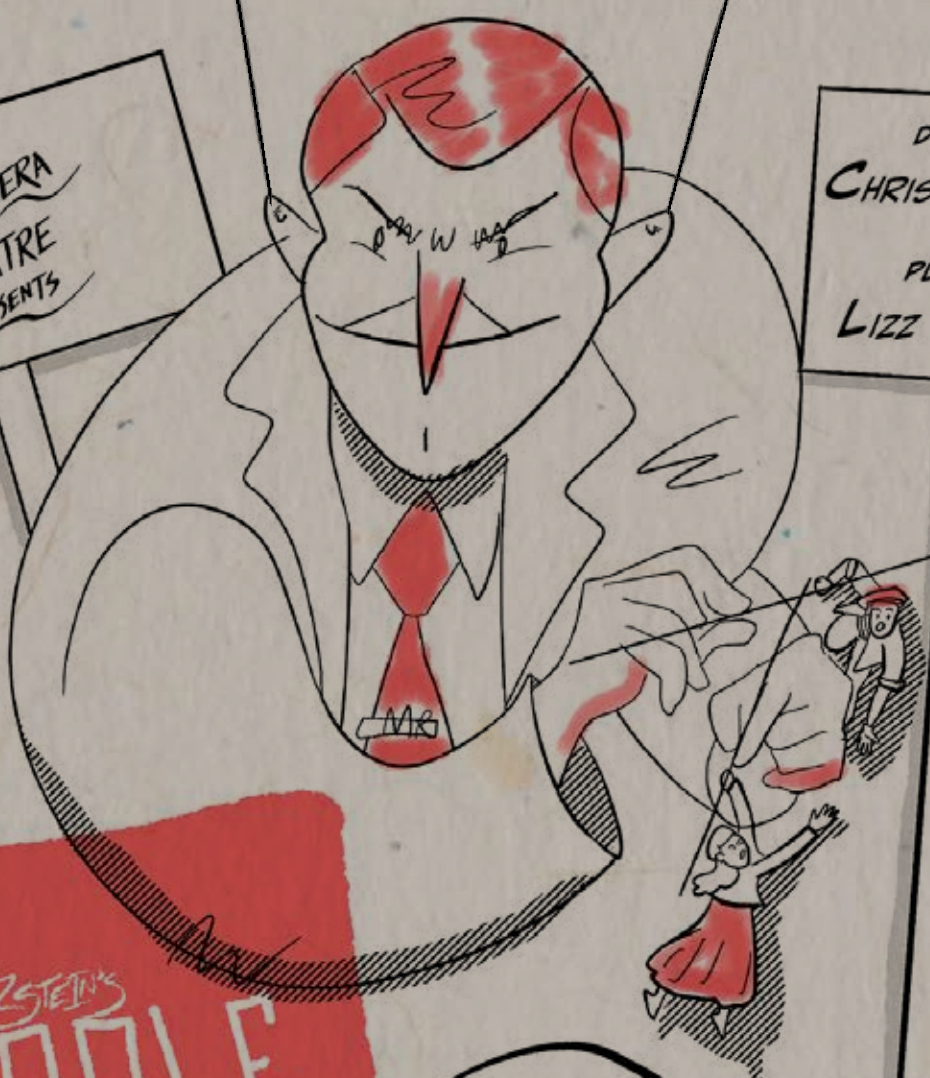


AN OPERA
THEATRE
PRESENTS

DIRECTED BY
CHRISTINA BALDWIN
PUPPETS BY
LIZZ WINDNAGEL

MARC BLITZSTEIN'S
THE CRADLE
WILL
ROCK

APRIL 18-21
2024



THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE!

FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & PRODUCER KELLY M TURPIN



Blitzstein's work, specifically *Cradle*, has been in my back pocket for a while. But when I re-read the libretto—almost a year ago now—and dove into the history of this production in particular, I had an immediate gut feeling that the time had come.

Many of us are flooded with so much empathetic weight right now that I want to make people laugh - I want to hear an audience full of giggles (no pressure, only chuckle if you feel like it). I also want something theatrically raw - not yet another live theater production that is trying to emulate the polish of a Netflix show, but real raw theater where there's no fear in showing the strings. This is why the combined artistic visions of Christina Baldwin and Lizz Windnagel - both fearless and playful creators - are incredibly exciting. Even though Lizz replaced the strings with shadow puppets.

At AOT we like to bite into things we can chew and give artists a chance to tell a story that means something to them as humans in this world. It's thrilling to share a work that has SO much to say, not just one point playing on repeat for 90 minutes.

Sometimes, we need a direct slap in the face, but we also need space to ponder the questions just as much as the message. The satirical comedy of *Cradle* eludes to some pretty obvious statements— like be critical about hoarded wealth— what's most intriguing about it is how many questions it presents.

At what cost does the art have to please those with the most funds?

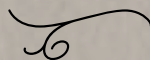
How do we keep integrity within a corrupt system that measures community worth by money?

At what point does true freedom of expression get left behind in order to survive?

Blitzstein didn't write this because he had the answers, and almost 90 years later we still don't. But I think what we have in common is that we both hope that, if we remain courageous and rally behind these questions, something's gotta give. (I know, I know. I was tempted to say what seemed so obvious to say.)

KELLY M TURPIN

Founder, Executive Director
& Producer



HEY THERE!

FROM STAGE DIRECTOR CHRISTINA BALDWIN

Being silly is my form of coping. It is perseverance, strength, renewal and hope all in one goofy moment. Being silly with other people? That is defiance and power.

My favorite Chekhov quote: “Do silly things. Foolishness is a great deal more vital and healthy than our straining and striving after a meaningful life.”

So it is with a serious commitment to silliness that we present Marc Blitzstein’s *The Cradle Will Rock*. This piece is nearly 100 years old, but the themes remain potent. Even the iconic tale of Marc Blitzstein and company persevering to bring their show to its premiere – with performers singing from the audience with Blitzstein narrating from the piano onstage is full of defiance, hope and power.

There is a great deal of strain from our day to day existence that follows us in every door, yet that perseverance to make something, silly or serious or beautiful – that act of making is what is needed to consider the world and its conundrums with a new perspective.

The *Cradle Will Rock* we present today was inspired by the concept of shadow puppetry and the seemingly simple visual images that portray complicated ideas.

Our narrator is our beleaguered artist, our Moll, our “maker” dedicated to seemingly foolish things. They ask the questions, they provide the wonder through the shadow puppetry – literally working with light and dark to wrestle with the questions in anticipation of a better day.

There is no simple solution. 100 years and still corruption, greed, and the outsize influence of privilege remain. There is no single person that will “fix” it for us. If there is a path through it is how we make things together – no matter how silly that seems.

CHRISTINA BALDWIN

Stage director





ABOUT AOT

AOT was founded in 2018 with the vision of creating a company that inspires community engagement by utilizing local MN artists of the highest caliber and presenting opera theatre works focused on social justice and community action.

With the help of an Artist Initiative Grant from the MN State Arts Board, founder Kelly M Turpin and a group of dedicated donors made this vision a reality in 2018 with AOT's inaugural production, *The Consul*, which focused on themes of immigration with Community Partner *The Advocates for Human Rights*. Since then, AOT has gone on to become a staple of the Twin Cities arts scene with productions such as *WE OUT: Voicing Our Truth* (July 2020), new commissions *The Sky Where You Are* (October 2020) which was inducted into the Library of Congress in February 2021, *In the Midst of Things: In Medias Res* which premiered to 1,002 high school students in May 2021, AOT's newest commission *Minági kiŋ dowáŋ* ("My spirit sings" in Dakota) an opera film about the life and continued legacy of Zitkála-Šá which premiered in October 2022 and is currently on a regional screening tour, and the annual fan favorite *DIVAS & DRAG*.

AOT actively engages communities both inside and outside the venue. At our productions, audiences can take part in post-show roundtable discussions with local organizations. Outside the venue, AOT hosts Voice Lab, a free monthly-facilitated peer-to-peer workshop for all singers, regardless of genre and ability. Our Opera immersion

program at LEAP International High School, South High School, and Lionsgate Academy replaces the standard historical focus of opera education programs with a focus on storytelling, authentic expression, movement, and sharing.

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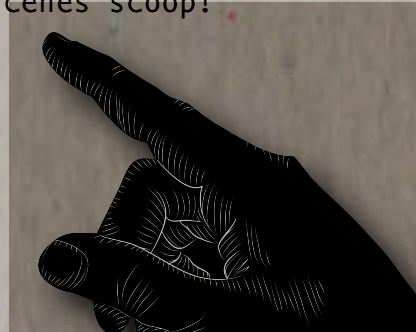
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CAST/PRODUCTION TEAM

THE CRADLE WILL ROCK

Play in music in ten scenes

Music, lyrics, and book

by Marc Blitzstein

Federal WPA Theater Project #891
Originally premiered in New York City
on June 16, 1937, and played through
Apr 2, 1938.

"Set against the background of the prostitution of another kind - the sell-out of one's profession. One's talents, one's dignity, and integrity at the hands of big business or the powers that be." Marc Blitzstein, 1956

COMPANY CAST:

Abilene Olson - MRS. MISTER/COP
Benjamin Dutcher - JUNIOR/DICK/DR. SPECIALIST
Corissa Bussian - SADIE/YASHA
Gary Briggie - MR. MISTER/CLERK
Isa Condo-Olvera - SISTER MISTER/STEVE
KrisAnne Weiss - ELLA/DAUBER/BUGS
Lizz Windnagel - THE MOLL/NARRATOR
Maurice Fields III - HARRY/REVEREND SALVATION
Tony Potts - EDITOR DAILY/GUS

COMPANY SWINGS:

Margaret Matejcek - THE MOLL, NARRATOR, SISTER MISTER, YASHA, SADIE
Sif Oberon - JUNIOR, BUGS, DICK, EDITOR DAILY, GUS, DR. SPECIALIST
Zach Staads - MR. MISTER, HARRY, REVEREND SALVATION, EDITOR DAILY, CLERK
Joni Griffith - MRS. MISTER, DAUBER, STEVE, COP, ELLA

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Bronson Talcott - COSTUME DESIGN ASSISTANT
Christina Baldwin - STAGE DIRECTOR
Ches Cipriano - STAGE MANAGER
Claudia Errickson - LIGHTING DESIGNER
Dominique Herskind - PUPPETEER
Dylan Rickard - PUPPETEER
Lizz Windnagel - PUPPET DIRECTOR/CREATOR
Marco Real d'Arbelles - MUSIC DIRECTOR
Patrick Adkins - PIANIST
Renata Nijiya - FRONT-OF-HOUSE MANAGER
Rose Windnagel - PUPPET DESIGNER
Sonya Berlovitz - COSTUME DESIGNER



Presented under license from European American Music Distributors Company on behalf of the Blitzstein heirs.

A LITTLE HISTORY

In late 1935, Blitzstein was playing a three-person musical scene for Bertolt Brecht on the theme of prostitution that he wrote for the Composers' Collective. Brecht asked, "Why don't you expand this? In our society, prostitution can involve many more things than just our bodies. There is prostitution for gain in so many walks of life: the artist, the preacher, the doctor, the lawyer, the newspaper editor. Why don't you pit them against this scene of literal selling?"

It took another year, but Blitzstein never forgot this suggestion, and in 1936 wrote *The Cradle Will Rock*. He wrote furiously, taking inspiration from union leader John C. Lewis, Congress of Industrial Organizations, and two pamphlets by William Z. Foster. He completed the entire work in 5 weeks.

After several unsuccessful rounds of his latest masterpiece being picked up and then dropped from varying production agencies, *The Cradle Will Rock* was finally noticed. It became project #891 of the Federal Theater Project, funded through the Works Progress Administration. And, a 21-year-old Orson Welles was selected to direct it.

Throughout production, the necessity of this story became ever more pertinent. The banality of the Great Depression, police violence against steelworkers protests, and the steady rise of Hitler in Europe turned America into a pressure cooker.



On April 26, 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, the Nazis tested their new air force on the Basque town of Guernica in northern Spain. One-third of Guernica's 5,000 inhabitants were killed or wounded. The attack on an innocent military target did as much as anything else to waken world consciousness to the destructive energies of fascism. Yet, the United States held firm in its purported neutrality, which prevented aid from reaching Guernica.

Nationally, in South Chicago on Memorial Day in 1937, a confrontation between the police and striking pickets at Republic Steel concluded in a bloody massacre. Eighty-four were hurt, and ten were killed from being shot in the back.



The Cradle Will Rock cast rehearsing with Blitzstein - 1937

In tandem with these events, continued violent labor action spread throughout the United States, which fueled threats to cut WPA funding from conservative members of Congress. *The Cradle Will Rock* and its pro-labor human rights message had garnered national attention. 18,000 advance tickets had already been sold, and the government feared its popularity would cause further damage to the WPA.

"I've apparently turned out a firebrand that nobody wants to touch."

- Marc Blitzstein on *Cradle*, 1937

On June 10, mere days before its premiere, word came from Washington that the Federal Theater Project was to be cut 30 percent—1,700 workers were to be fired. The WPA also ordered that no new show openings could be held before July 1. *Cradle* wasn't the only show to be affected, but inevitably, everyone saw the blow directed at *Cradle*, and immediate cries of "censorship!" went out.

Due to this announcement, Actors' Equity informed director Orson Welles and producer John Houseman that if the performers wanted to keep receiving their federal theater project paychecks and stay on contract, they were not allowed to perform on a stage not sanctioned by the Federal Theater Project.

“I can’t regard this work purely from the viewpoint of an artist - I believe firmly in what the play stands for.” - Marc Blitzstein

They had come too far, and this was the type of work the masses were demanding. The team was not going to back down; they were determined to find a way to present *The Cradle Will Rock*.

On opening night, armed guards enlisted by the government stood at the doors to the Maxine Elliott Theater to ensure that no one removed Federal Theatre property—sets, costumes, scores, etc. The Cradle team determined they could still put on the show without all that, but the one thing they couldn’t do without was a piano. The project’s technical assistant, Jean Rosenthal, borrowed a battered upright for Blitzstein to play while it was simultaneously decided to move the production to the Venice Theater.

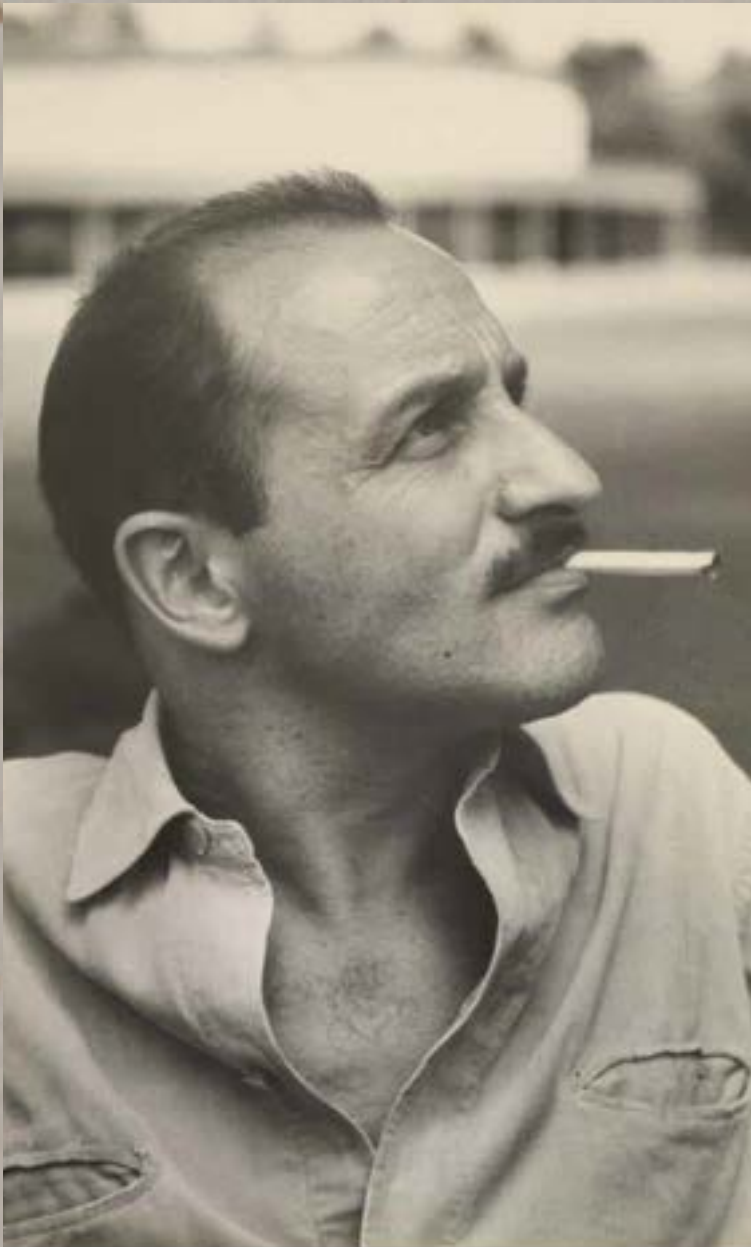
The Downtown Music School and fellow artists quickly spread the word of the new location and almost 2,000 audience members marched the 20 blocks from the Maxine Elliott to the Venice. By 8:50 pm, the theater was packed.



Bernstein and Blitzstein

There was nothing left to do but begin. No one knew what might happen. Maybe Marc, in his shirtsleeves and suspenders, sweating in the light of the single spotlight, would play through *The Cradle Will Rock* and sing all the parts himself, just as he had done hundreds of times at backer's auditions and rehearsals

He began with the Moll's street corner scene and got through singing the first three lines when, as producer John Houseman recalls, "Hearing the words taken out of his mouth, Marc paused, and at that moment the spotlight moved off the stage, past the proscenium arch into the house, and came to rest on the lower level box where a thin girl in a green dress was standing, glassy-eyed, stiff with fear, only half audible at first but gathering strength with every note 'For two days out of seven, two dollar bills I'm given' It must have taken almost superhuman courage for an inexperienced performer to stand up before 2,000 people in a terribly exposed location more than fifty feet away from the piano. Add to this that she was a relief worker, wholly dependent on her weekly WPA check."



"If Olive Stanton (the original actor of the Moll) had not risen on cue in the box, I doubt if the rest of us would have had the courage to stand up and carry on. But once that thin, incredibly clear voice came out, we all fell in line.", Recalled fellow cast member Hiram Sherman.

From then on, the performers who had come to *The Venice* that night, which was most of them, rose on cue from wherever they found themselves seated in the house.

When it was over, pandemonium broke out. New York had never seen such a night of sheer theatrical defiance. The following morning, it was national front page news. *Cradle* was a work of searing audacity and artistic courage.

Excerpts from Eric A. Gordon's book *Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blizstein

HEY THERE!



FROM MUSIC DIRECTOR MARCO REAL D'ARBELLES

Leonard Bernstein said, “Marc was and still is, as far as I’m concerned, the greatest master of the setting of the American language to music.”

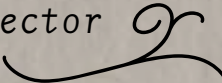
Copland said Blitzstein was the first American composer “to invent a vernacular musical idiom that sounded convincing when heard from the lips of the man-in-the-street. The taxi driver, the panhandler, the corner druggist were given voice for the first time in the context of serious musical drama.” What stands out for me is the musical palette, sound effects, and all, that Blitzstein uses with great economy. His musical characterizations are so clear and direct (Aaron Copland complained sometimes too direct); that we know immediately that there is something off with Mrs. Mister. We hear a Bach Chorale gradually getting more dissonant representing Reverend Salvation’s own corruption.

There are moments when the piano mimics the beeping of a news flash, or the pounding of a gavel to bring us out of a flashback paradise and back into the Nightcourt. In the scene with Editor Daily, not only does the piano mimic the clatter of a typewriter, but it also represents Mr. Mister’s “machinations” to hold power.

With influences from Schoenberg’s 12-tone system (one of his teachers), Stravinsky’s mixed meters, Beethoven’s own

“cry of the people” overture, as well as jazz, Cuban rumba, Argentine tango, Jewish melody, and the protest march, Marc (as this cast lovingly calls him) really brought all the musical languages available to him to create his world in Cradle. In the end, what does “American” mean anyway? Is it the mixing of it all together that makes it “American”? From Marc’s own writings, we know he was looking for “fresh ideas of form” that were different from those inherited from Europe, something “for the masses.” Whatever Marc’s original intentions, Cradle would set American music on a new course.

MARCO REAL D'ARBELLES

Music director 



ABOUT MARC BLITZSTEIN

“Music, must have a social as well as artistic base; it should broaden its scope and reach not only the select few but the masses.”

- Marc Blitzstein



Marc Blitzstein 1905-1964
Federal Theatre Project
- Library of Congress

“I supposed the two areas in which you could say he was the most influential, not just on me but on American musical theater in general, were one: the area of using the popular song form as a building block. In other words he could make very large forms, very big pieces but always based on the pop song. The second area which I think is even more important is that I think Marc was the, and still is as far as I'm concerned, the greatest master of the setting of the American language to music.” - Leonard Bernstein, 1976



Bernstein and Blitzstein



Cradle Will Rock Rehearsal
Federal Theatre Project
- Library of Congress

“Marc Blitzstein, was almost a saint. He was so totally and serenely convinced of the Eden which was waiting for us all [on] the other side of the Revolution that there was no way of talking politics to him. He didn't care who was in the Senate, or what Mr. Roosevelt said - [Roosevelt] was just the spokesman for the bourgeoisie! When he came into the room the lights got brighter. He was an engine, a rocket, directed in one direction which was his opera [The Cradle Will Rock] - which he almost believed had only to be performed to start the Revolution.” - Orson Welles in 1984

BIOGRAPHIES



Abilene Olson

(she/her) is so excited to be making her AOT debut with The Cradle Will Rock.

She is a performer in the twin cities, and a graduate of Stephens College. Some of her favorite credits include Ghost Quartet & In the Green with Theatre Elision, and Loch Mess & Scrooge in Rouge with Open Eye Figure Theatre. When she's not acting, she can be found spending time with her pets, Emma and Merle, avoiding her household chores, and shamelessly promoting her next project. Catch her in Lizzie at Open Eye Figure Theatre in fall 2024!



Benjamin Dutcher

(He/Him/His) is a Twin Cities based singer, actor, and educator who has been seen on theatrical stages

across the country. Delighted to be joining AOT for the first time, his repertoire covers a vast range of both musical theater and opera, and includes on-camera appearances for the History Channel and PBS. Previous engagements include work with Theater Latté Da, Asolo Repertory Theater, Artistry Theater, Trademark Theater, Six Points Theater, Opera Columbus, Out of the Box Opera, Skylark Opera, Mill City-

Summer Opera, St. Croix Valley Opera, and Minnesota Opera. Most recently, he made his straight play debut in the critically acclaimed "Ironbound" with Frank Theatre. Benjamin was a part of the Drama Desk Award-winning Cast of "All is Calm" presented Off-Broadway at the Sheen Center in NYC, and especially loves being a dad. benjamindutcher.com



Ches Cipriano

(they/them) is a Filipino, Queer, first-generation American. They operate as a community cultivator,

producer/organizer, radical joy seeker, and mixed-media collaborator. They received their B.A. in Theater & Dance with a minor in Performance Design and Technologies from Macalester College in 2020. Their artistic practice is rooted in puppetry, laughter, animation, and tickling curiosities. They treasure community-based art, and you can often find them at Heart of the Beast Theatre, or Open Eye Theater. They are also passionate about large bodies of water, juggling and being surprised. Connect with them on Instagram @chesarthey



Christina Baldwin

(she/her) is a director, writer, adapter, producer and performer.

She serves as artistic director at the Jungle Theater in Minneapolis where she recently created and directed Dinner for One. A collaborator with the Tony Award-winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune for nearly 10 years, Christina co-adapted and performed the title role in their critically-acclaimed touring production of Carmen. Christina was the librettist for In the Midst of Things with An Opera Theatre and directed the virtual work Everything Comes to a Head with Lyric Opera of the North and the Decameron Opera Coalition (selected as part of the Performing Arts COVID-19 Response Collection in the Library of Congress). She has been a recording artist and vocalist with the Minnesota Orchestra, a writer/actor on NPR's "Wits", and lent her voice to animated short films by the Dutch filmmaker Rostó A.D. (Cannes Film Festival award-winner).

Corissa Bussian

(she/her) was most recently seen as Juliet in Mixed Precipitation's Pick Up Truck

Opera Vol. 3:

Romeo & Juliet, singing Lady Macduff in Macbeth and the Weírd Sisters in Theater Latté Da's Next Festival, and made her principal role debut at Minnesota Opera



as Chue Moua in Jocelyn Hagen's world premier of The Song Poet. Corissa was the lucky recipient of Opera Reading Project's first IDEA Singer Fellowship in 2021-2022. During that season she sang the role of Pamina in Die Zauberflöte with ORP, performed the same role in Mixed Precipitation's Pick Up Truck Opera Vol. 2: The Magic Flute, and as the Inquisitor in the U.S. premier of Besse with Skylark Opera, where she also enjoyed covering the roles of Mother in Amahl & the Night Visitors and Beatrice in Jake Heggie's Three Decembers. Favorite roles include Mimì La Bohème, Susanna Le nozze di Figaro, Zerbinetta Ariadne auf Naxos, Despina Così fan tutte, and Nella Gianni Schicchi. Corissa received her Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from DePaul University and holds a Masters of Music in vocal performance and opera studies from The Shepherd School of Music, Rice University. Corissa enjoys baking, puzzles, boba, traveling abroad, and adventures around the cities with her husband and young two sons.

Dominique Herskind

(she/they) is a puppet artist who enjoys creating comedic and surreal adult puppet shows. Her

first job was working for a puppet wagon in the suburbs and she's been in love with puppetry ever since. They have performed in various puppet cabarets at Open Eye Theatre and at Heart of the Beast Theatre. They-



have worked as a teaching artist doing after school programs and got to work on Little Theatre's Harvestfest Puppet Parade in 2023. They were also a part of the 2022 Puppet Lab cohort. Currently, Dominique is working on a solo burlesque performance that she hopes will be silly, sexy, and puppet-tacular.



Dylan Rickard

(He/They) is a local actor, singer, and puppeteer, ecstatic to be making his AOT debut! Since gradu-

ating from the UMN Guthrie BFA Actor Training Program in 2020, Dylan has constructed and operated large-scale puppets, performed at Open Eye Theatre, marionetted a lovely tree lady fabricated by the Bob Baker Theatre in L.A., and is co-directing a festival through Puppeteers of America: the 2024 Minneapolis Puppetry Palate!



Gary Briggles

(he/him) is a versatile singer-actor, director and coach with over 45 years of professional experience in

the full range of music-theatre genres. He is nationally-renowned for his performances of Gilbert & Sullivan operas and work in contemporary opera. Locally he has been featured at The Ordway, History Theatre, The Jungle, Frank Theatre, Nautilus Music-Theatre, Skylark Opera,

Park Square Theatre, Artistry, etc. He has staged productions for GSVLOC, and proudly made his AOT debut in their premier production "The Consul" (2018). Gary is the executive director of Raison D'etre Opera.



Isa Condo-Olvera

(she/her/ella) is thrilled to be collaborating with An Opera Theatre for the first time! Born and raised in San

Jose, Costa Rica to an Ecuadorian dad and a Mexican mom, Isa was always captivated by music, storytelling, and the power of words. She moved to Minneapolis to pursue her training at the UMN Guthrie BFA Actor Training Program and has since worked locally as an actor with Ten Thousand Things, Guthrie Theater, Playwrights' Center, Yellow Tree Theatre, and History Theatre. Outside of Minneapolis, she has performed at the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, the Texas Shakespeare Festival, the National Theatre of Costa Rica, and Teatro Auditorio Nacional. When she's not onstage, Isa finds joy in spending time with her loved ones, nerding out about dialects, writing her feelings, interviewing strangers, eating tacos al pastor, and playing board games. More info on her website: isacondoolvera.com



Joni Griffith

(she/her) is a singer, violinist, musical saw player, and movement artist currently residing in Minneapolis, MN. She has toured for six seasons with theater company Mixed Precipitation, bringing joyful outdoor opera everywhere from farms to city centers across Minnesota and Wisconsin. She is a frequent performer and deviser with Twin Cities physical theater group Combustible Company. In addition to performing, Joni has written, recorded, and performed original music for multiple shows in the midwest including A Midsummer Night's Dream, Monster Heart, The Tempest, and the dance film Elemental Body. When not working on music you can find her gleefully riding her bike through the city or across the country! www.jonigriffith.com



KrisAnne Weiss

(she/her), mezzo-soprano, performs an eclectic array of music-theater and concert works, appearing with Skylark Opera Theatre, An Opera Theatre, Lyric Opera of the North, Nautilus Music-Theater, and Opera on the Lake, among many others. Most recently, she played the role of Romeo in Mixed Precipitation's Romeo and Juliet, an adaptation of Bellini's I Capuleti e i Montecchi, and the role of Ruth in Dark Sis

ters with Journey North Opera. She hosts and facilitates An Opera Theatre's Voice Labs, a free monthly artistic development and community-building resource for local singers at any point in their careers, and she is on the voice faculty at St. Olaf College. She is interested in genre-bending collaborations, mutual aid, cutting her own hair, and physical revelry of all kinds.



Lizz Windnagel

(they/them) is an interdisciplinary performer and creator. They have always been interested in where artforms meet and how they can inform one another. As a performer they have performed and directed with Open Eye Theater, In the Heart of the Beast, We are Married, and Mixed Precipitation. They also created several original works that premiered in the Twin Cities, Chicago, and Calgary, Canada. Lizz holds an MFA in directing from the University of Calgary. They founded the theater programming at the Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota where they currently teach devised theater classes.

**LABOR IS
ENTITLED TO
ALL IT CREATES**



**Marco Real-
d'Arbelles**

(He/him) At home in symphonic and operatic styles ranging from baroque to contemporary,

award-winning conductor Marco Real-d'Arbelles is the Associate Artistic Director of the Bach Society of MN and has performed with VocalEssence, Cantus, the Minnesota Chorale, among others. He created "Outside the Box", a series of collaborative performances with the Bach Society and diverse artists such as hip-hop artist See More Perspective, and Teatro del Pueblo (coming June 2024).

Marco worked with AOT for the premieres of "In the Midst of Things" and "Zitkála-Šá" and is currently Music Director of Opera Immersion, AOT's educational program. He is also Music Director of Opera on the Lake and Bold North Baroque Opera. He made his debut with the Miami Symphony and has worked with operas and orchestras in St. Louis, Chicago, Shanghai, and Caracas.

Born in Nicaragua and raised in Miami, Marco resides in the Twin Cities with Yunyue and their three-year-old son.



Margaret Matejcek

(She/her/hers) is a Minneapolis-based soprano thrilled to be working with AOT for the very

first time! Previous local engagements include Minnesota Opera, Lakes Area Music Festival, Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Company, Minnesota Chorale, imPLS, and more. Margaret recently obtained her master's degree in Vocal Performance from Boston University, where she was given the opportunity to debut at Carnegie Hall as a winner of the BU Soloist's Competition, and performed operatic roles such as Morgana (Alcina) and Mrs. Webb (Our Town). Margaret also holds a degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Minnesota and is the co-owner and artistic director of Imaginality Opera, a non-profit that strives to bring an educational curriculum about opera to elementary school classrooms. Margaret also enjoys voice acting, studying dance, teaching yoga, and camping!



Maurice Fields III

(they/them) is making their debut with AOT in The Cradle Will Rock. Described as a

“brassy” dramatic tenor, Maurice is a graduate of a Masters of Music in Vocal Performance and Literature at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. At this institution, they had the luck of studying under the likes of Nathan Gunn and Sarah Wigley whilst flourishing in the Lyric Theatre at Illinois program. Before their time in graduate school, Maurice played a variety of roles at Concordia University Saint Paul, ranging from character voice acting for Audrey II (Little Shop of Horrors) or playing the UPS Guy in Working: The Musical. Maurice has most recently played Stine (City of Angels), Gherardo (Gianni Schicchi), and Father (Children of Eden). Maurice's adventures in theatre extend to directing, dramaturgy, and dance. Recently they were the assistant director, dramaturg, dialect coach, and surtitleist for A Little Night Music. Maurice is excited to be back in Minnesota and working as an actor and vocalist.



Patrick Adkins

(He/Him) is a Minneapolis based pianist and composer excited to be making his debut

with An Opera Theatre!

Most frequently active as both a sideman and band leader at jazz venues across the Twin Cities, he is equally at home in a variety of settings and genres, most recently appearing in Open Eye Theatre's production of Scrooge in Rouge. Patrick's primary projects include co-leading the modern jazz collective SPACE (whose next appearance will be at this year's Twin Cities Jazz Festival), and switching from piano to synthesizers for the indie glam-pop band d'Lakes. Outside of performing, he can be found catching a movie at The Main Cinema, catching a game at Target Field, or in line at any number of local ice cream shops.



Rose Windnagel

(she/her) is a multi-medium visual artist, who spends her time painting with acrylics,

sketching, crocheting, and creating garments. She is currently attending Minneapolis Technical College as a fashion technologies student. She enjoys sourcing second-hand and vintage clothing items for the purpose of creating stylized fashion photography. Rose was introduced to puppeteering in 2013 after watching their older sibling

Lizz Windnagel's production "This Side of the Blue." Eleven years later, inspired by her sibling's work throughout the years, Rose assists Lizz in bringing their ideas to life.



Sifryn Oberon

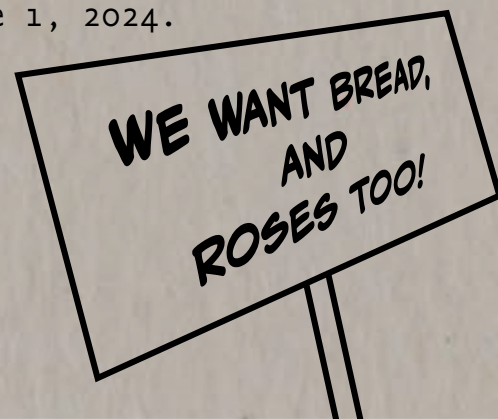
(they/them) is an autistic trans & non-binary actor, musician, and clown, and they are delighted to be making their debut with An Opera Theatre. Sifryn began cultivating theatrical skills on the family farm, while singing and performing for audiences of dairy cows. (It was said these performances were very moo-ving. They perform across many genres, including: Shakespeare, musicals, street theatre, improv, puppetry, film, & more. Sifryn studied theatre & music at the U of M, Duluth. Credits include: Christopher Boone in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Igor in Young Frankenstein (Duluth Playhouse), 46 Plays for America's First Ladies (Theatre Pro Rata), Papageno in The Magic Flute (Pickup Truck Opera), Troilus in Troilus & Cressida (Queered Classics), Ulysses in Flora & Ulysses (Lyric Arts), Lonely Soul/Puppeteer in Balloonacy (Lakeshore Players), and frolicking about as a Fool at Renaissance Festivals.



Sonya Berlovitz

(she/her) designed over sixty productions for the Tony award-winning Franco-American company Theatre de la Jeune Lune between 1980 and 2008 including Don Juan Giovanni, Figaro, The Miser, Carmen, Hamlet, Cosi Fan Tutti, The Magic Flute, Tartuffe, Medea, Circus of Tales and The Three Musketeers. Since 2009 she has been a resident designer with The Moving Company, touring shows with them to South Coast Repertory, Playmakers Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. Productions elsewhere have included The Wilma Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, the Guthrie Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, The Jungle Theater, Ten Thousand Things Theater Company, and Theatre Latte Da. This is her first production with An Opera Theatre.

Ms Berlovitz most recently had a solo exhibition in Tokyo, Japan called Red, which included artwork and costume renderings. Her next project is an opera, Johnny Skeekey, at Theatre Latte Da opening June 1, 2024.

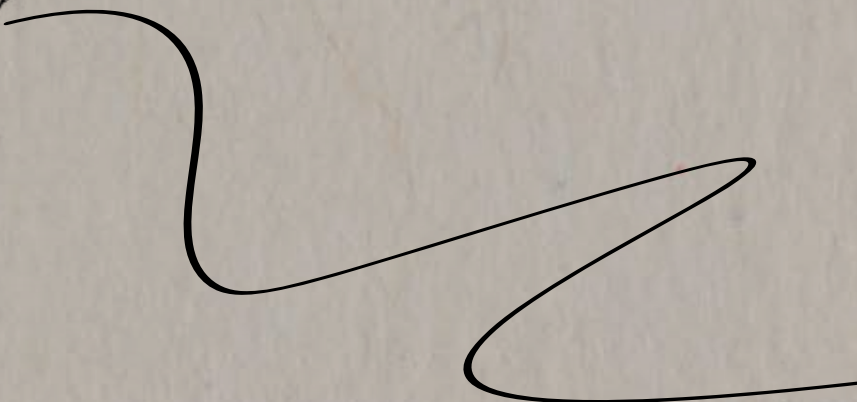




Tony Potts,
 (he/him) a Minnesota-based baritone, has been described by the Pioneer Press as having “not only swagger, charm, and charisma, but a baritone voice that blends beautifully...” He has worked with companies such as Theater Latté Da, Minnesota Opera, Skylark Opera Theatre, St. Croix Valley Opera, and Dallas Opera. He is a two-time finalist at the international Lotte Lenya Competition and holds Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Vocal Performance from the University of Northwestern, St. Paul, and University of North Texas, respectively. (tonypotts.org)



Zach Staads
 (he/she) is a Minneapolis-based tenor, actor, producer, and non-professional clown who’s elated to be working with AOT for the first time! During the past two years, Zach helped co-found a film production company, New Neighbor, as a creative producer, co-wrote and performed a two-person show, What’s Your Day Job?, with Fearless Comedy Productions, and performed as Bottom in an all-Mechanicals cutting of A Midsummer Night’s Dream at the 2021 MN Renaissance Festival. Before that, Zach earned his BA at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire while performing Prospero/The Tempest, Harstad/Kingdom Come, and was Ensemble Captain & Assistant Director/Don Giovanni. She also studied voice, directed three one-act plays, and did dramaturgical work. Offstage, Zach is a freelance producer, hobbyist Shakespeare script cutter, and loves running his (as of writing) six active TTRPG campaigns. See her work at newneighbor.co and zachstaads.com



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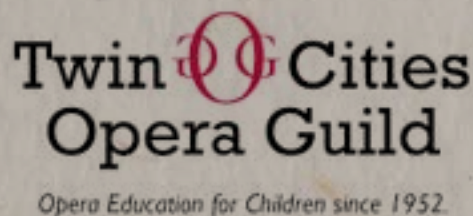
Karenski Simonson



Keys 4/4 Kids accepts used pianos as donations and places them back in the community through their retail store, their placement program, and the Pianos on Parade program. Check out their meaningful work at keys44kids.net



This project was made possible in part with the support of Rimon: The Minnesota Jewish Arts Council, an initiative of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation



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This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council and Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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**One big question inside me cries:
how many fakers, peace undertakers, paid strikebreakers,
how many toiling, ailing, dying, piled-up bodies,
Brother, does it take to make you wise?**
- from *The Cradle Will Rock* by Marc Blitzstein

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Photograph of the entire cast of the Mercury Theatre stage presentation of *The Cradle Will Rock* - Esquire-Coronet, Inc., photograph by Herbert Kehl - Self scan from Coronet magazine from June 1938, Volume 4, Number 2 (page 102)