



2022-23 Season

**Curtis Opera Theatre Presents Benjamin Britten's  
Gothic Tale of Terror, *The Turn of the Screw*,  
November 18 and 20**

Director Chas Rader-Shieber returns, and conductor Michelle Rofrano makes her Curtis debut in this haunting psychological thriller

PHILADELPHIA, PA—November 2, 2022— The **Curtis Opera Theatre** presents Benjamin Britten's spine-tingling tale of ghosts and possession, *The Turn of the Screw*, on **November 18 at 7:30 p.m.** and **November 20 at 2:30 p.m.** at the Philadelphia Film Center. Innovative director **Chas Rader-Shieber**, praised by Toronto's Classical 96.3 FM as "a force to be reckoned with in the opera world," returns with a chilling vision of Britten's immensely popular atmospheric masterpiece. This riveting new production features a stellar cast of young opera stars under the masterful baton of conductor **Michelle Rofrano**.

Based on Henry James's chilling 19th-century novella, composer Benjamin Britten and librettist Myfanwy Piper's richly nuanced psychological thriller *The Turn of the Screw* has kept audiences on the edge of their seats for over six decades. A young governess travels to a remote English country house to care for two precocious young orphans. Greeted by the housekeeper Mrs. Grose, she discovers a dark and twisted past looming over Bly Manor. The children's behavior becomes increasingly erratic, but the distraught governess is instructed never to disturb their guardian in London.

With each bizarre new incident, she begins to believe they are haunted by a pair of menacing spirits—Miss Jessel, the children's former governess, and the valet Peter Quint, her diabolical lover. Questioning her sanity, she soon becomes entangled in a battle for their souls. Are these apparitions real or simply a figment of an overactive imagination? Are the children innocent, wicked, or unwitting pawns in a spectral game of chess? Britten's ingenious chamber opera ratchets up the tension as it builds to a terrifying, claustrophobic conclusion.

Acclaimed Sicilian-American opera conductor **Michelle Rofrano**, founder and artistic director of PROTESTRA, an orchestral ensemble of activist-minded musicians that bridge the divide between social justice advocacy and classical music, makes her Curtis debut leading the cast and members of the Curtis

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Symphony Orchestra in this fully staged chamber opera, sung in English with English supertitles. Resident Stage Director **Chas Rader-Shieber**, who joined the Curtis faculty in 2009, directs the suspenseful production. Set design is by **Steven Kemp**, costume design is by **Susan Branch Towne**, and lighting design is by **Jacob Hughes**.

Single tickets start at just \$19 and are available for purchase at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu). Subscriptions are now on sale for Curtis's 2022–23 season. The flexible Choose Your Own subscription option offers 25% off ticket prices when purchasing tickets to two or more performances. For the 2022–23 season, Curtis is also offering a new Season Pass, with access to all performances for \$149 per person. To order a subscription, visit [Curtis.edu/Subscribe](https://www.curtis.edu/Subscribe), call (215) 893-7902, or email [tickets@curtis.edu](mailto:tickets@curtis.edu).

The Curtis Opera Theatre returns to the Philadelphia Film Center on Friday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 12, at 2:30 p.m. for a production of Gaetano Donizetti's charming comedy classic, *The Elixir of Love*. The 2022–23 opera season concludes with George Frideric Handel's baroque masterpiece, *Ariodante*, at the Kimmel Cultural Campus's Perelman Theater, May 4–7 at 7:30 p.m. To learn more about these performances, as well as the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble 20/21 concerts, Curtis Recital Series, and more, visit [Curtis.edu/Calendar](https://www.curtis.edu/Calendar).

The **Curtis Opera Theatre** has become known for imaginative productions, bold concepts, and absorbing theatre. Under the artistic direction of Eric Owens and the Hirsig Family Chair in Vocal Studies, Miloš Repický, promising young singers work alongside established professional directors and designers, resulting in fresh interpretations of standard repertoire and contemporary works. All of Curtis's 22 students in vocal studies are cast regularly throughout each season, receiving a rare level of performance in fully staged productions, in recitals at Field Concert Hall, and as soloists with Curtis on Tour and the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. Curtis's educational approach opens professional opportunities for Curtis graduates, who sing with top opera companies across the United States and Europe, including La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, Houston Grand Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera.

### **About the Curtis Institute of Music**

The **Curtis Institute of Music** educates and trains exceptionally gifted young musicians to engage a local and global community through the highest level of artistry. For nearly a century, Curtis has provided each member of its small student body with an unparalleled education alongside musical peers, distinguished by a “learn by doing” philosophy and personalized attention from a faculty that includes a high proportion of actively performing musicians. With admissions based solely on artistic promise, no student is turned away due to financial need. Curtis invests in each admitted student, ensuring no tuition is charged for their studies, and they enter the profession free from educational debt. In a typical year, Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings in Philadelphia and around the world. Learn more at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

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**CURTIS OPERA THEATRE: *THE TURN OF THE SCREW***

Music by Benjamin Britten

Libretto by Myfanwy Piper

November 18, 2022 | Friday at 7:30 p.m.

November 20, 2022 | Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Philadelphia Film Center

1412 Chestnut Street

Michelle Rofrano, conductor

Chas Rader-Shieber, stage director

Steven Kemp, set designer

Susan Branch Towne, costume designer

Jacob Hughes, lighting designer

**CAST (in order of appearance)**

|             | <b>November 18, 20</b> |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Prologue    | Sam Higgins            |
| Governess   | Olivia Smith           |
| Miles       | Cavan Hurley*          |
| Flora       | Maya Mor Mitrani       |
| Mrs. Grose  | Emily Damasco          |
| Peter Quint | Ben Schaefer           |
| Miss Jessel | Emilie Kealani         |

\*guest artist

Fully staged production with members of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, sung in English with English supertitles by Celeste Montemarano.

*The Curtis Opera Theatre is generously supported by the Ernestine Bacon Cairns Trust, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, and the Wyncote Foundation.*

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