



2023-24 Season

Curtis Opera Theatre Presents Francis Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* with Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, March 15 and 17

Director Eve Summer and conductor Michelle Rofrano return for this captivating double bill featuring members of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra at the Philadelphia Film Center

PHILADELPHIA, PA—February 27, 2024—The **Curtis Opera Theatre's** 2023–24 series continues on **Friday, March 15 at 7:30 p.m.** and **Sunday, March 17 at 2:30 p.m.** with a pairing of two 20th-century masterpieces, **Francis Poulenc's** outrageously funny farce, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* and **Kurt Weill** and **Bertolt Brecht's** darkly satirical “ballet chanté,” *The Seven Deadly Sins*, at the **Philadelphia Film Center**. Critically acclaimed director **Eve Summer** returns this spring on the heels of rave reviews for her acclaimed Curtis Opera Theatre productions of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in 2022 and Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring* in 2020 to lead an exciting cast of rising young opera stars accompanied by members of the **Curtis Symphony Orchestra** under the baton of “thrilling” conductor **Michelle Rofrano** (*Opera Today*).

Gender norms explode on the stage in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, Poulenc's surreal opéra bouffe (comic opera) based on the 1917 play of the same name by Guillaume Apollinaire. Thérèse, a bored housewife, grows weary of her daily routine in the fictional seaside resort of Zanzibar and suddenly becomes the male General Tirésias when her breasts turn into balloons and float away. As they lead a new life, fighting distant wars on foreign battlefields, their stay-at-home husband discovers a way to make babies on his own—but not just one: 40,049 of them. This clever French comedy features a delightfully fizzy cocktail of opera, cabaret, and jazz, with a tale as consciously arty, feminist, and political as it is insightfully witty.

A biting critique of industrial capitalism, Weill and Brecht's *The Seven Deadly Sins* follows the perils of a woman sent away by her exploitative family to earn enough money to buy a house on the Mississippi River. In this sung ballet of split personalities, the resourceful heroine Anna is divided into two halves of the same woman: a singer (Anna I) and a dancer (Anna II). Over seven years and in seven cities, from Memphis to Philadelphia and San Francisco, Anna faces down the seven deadly sins of Sloth, Pride, Wrath, Gluttony,

—continued—



Lust, Greed, and Envy, each testing her wavering moral compass at every turn. This sardonic tale of sacrifice draws on the classic pop song and dance numbers of the 1920s and '30s, blended with that quintessential Weill sound and a timeless commentary on values, virtues, and the “almighty dollar.”

“I’m over the moon to share in the musical and theatrical explosion that is this exhilarating double bill!” says director **Eve Summer**. “Each opera is rooted in the birth of a bold new style of theater: Surrealism coined by Guillaume Apollinaire for his play *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* which Poulenc adapted for his marvelous, biting, absurd opera of the same name, and Epic or Dialectical Theater, coined by Bertolt Brecht who wrote the libretto for Weill’s gorgeous, unrelenting, and heart-rending *The Seven Deadly Sins*. The juxtaposition will wallop you in the best way, the surreal and the epic, caprice and cruelty, the ludicrous and the grotesque—our charge is to explore two distinctive examinations of the very core of our urges, identities, and imperatives as humans.”

Acclaimed Italian 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, made her Curtis debut during the school’s 2022–23 season conducting Benjamin Britten’s gothic ghost tale, *The Turn of the Screw*. This spring, she returns to the podium to lead members of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra and the remarkable casts of these two operas performed in French and German with English supertitles.

Curtis Opera Theatre’s double bill of *Les Mamelles du Tirésias* and *The Seven Deadly Sins* features a striking set by internationally renowned scenic and projection designer **Cameron Anderson**, who joins Curtis Opera Theatre on the heels of designing multi-platinum pop star Charlie Puth’s 2023 global tour. A glittering “container” for both operatic worlds, it functions as a modular canvas for the storytelling, unifying the entire theatrical experience and transforming between the two operas. Award-winning costume designer **Whitney Locher**—whose innovative shows have won Obie, Off-Broadway Alliance, Helen Hayes, Lucille Lortel, and Craig Noel awards—and hair and makeup designer **Brittany Rappise** deliver an array of eye-catching, colorful, and evocative looks gently rooted in the 1930s with a clever nod to the present day. Cleveland Opera Theater resident lighting designer **Steve Shack** draws out the surrealistic soul of Poulenc and Weill’s works, capturing the emotional depth and nuance of their masterful libretti.

Single tickets for *Les Mamelles du Tirésias* and *The Seven Deadly Sins* start at \$19 and are available for purchase at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu). The flexible Choose Your Own subscription option offers 25% off ticket prices when purchasing tickets to two or more performances. To order a subscription, visit [Curtis.edu/Subscribe](https://www.curtis.edu/Subscribe), call (215) 893-7902, or email tickets@curtis.edu.

The 2023–24 Curtis Opera Theatre season concludes with Leoš Janáček’s *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Kimmel Center’s Perelman Theater on May 2 and 3 at 7:30 p.m. and May 4 and 5 at 3:00 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).

—continued—



About Curtis Opera Theatre

Through imaginative productions and extraordinary musicianship, the promising young artists of Curtis Opera Theatre work alongside renowned conductors, directors, and designers to present audiences with fresh and passionate performances from across the operatic repertoire. With the visionary leadership of Eric Owens and Miloš Repický, Curtis's voice and opera students are cast regularly throughout the season, providing a unique level of performance experience to draw upon throughout their careers 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 Curtis Institute of Music

At Curtis, the world's most talented young musicians develop into exceptional artists, creators, and innovators. With a tuition-free foundation, Curtis is a unique environment for teaching and learning. A small school by design, students realize their artistic potential through intensive, individualized study with the most renowned, sought-after faculty. Animated by a learn-by-doing philosophy, Curtis students share their music with audiences through more than 100 performances each year, including solo and chamber recitals, orchestral concerts, and opera—all free or at an affordable cost—offering audiences unique opportunities to participate in pivotal moments in these young musicians' careers. Curtis students experience a close connection to the greatest artists and organizations in classical music, and innovative initiatives that integrate new technologies and encourage entrepreneurship—all within an historic campus in the heart of culturally rich Philadelphia. In this diverse, collaborative community, Curtis's extraordinary artists challenge, support, and inspire one another—continuing an unparalleled 100-year legacy of musicians who have led, and will lead, classical music into a thriving, equitable, and multidimensional future. Learn more at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

CURTIS OPERA THEATRE: *LES MAMMELES DE TIRESIAS* & *THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS*

Les Mamelles de Tirésias

Music and libretto by Francis Poulenc

Adapted from the play *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* by Guillaume Apollinaire

Featuring members of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra

The Seven Deadly Sins

Music by Kurt Weill

Libretto by Bertolt Brecht

Featuring members of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra

March 15, 2024 | Friday at 7:30 p.m.

March 17, 2024 | Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

Philadelphia Film Center, 1412 Chestnut Street

Michelle Rofrano, conductor

Eve Summer, stage director

Cameron Anderson, scenic designer

Steve Shack, lighting designer

—continued—



Whitney Locher, costume designer
Brittany Rappise, hair and makeup supervisor

CAST

Les Mamelles de Tirésias

(Sung in French with English supertitles)

	March 15, 17
Le Directeur	Nathan Schludecker
Thérèse/Tirésias/La Cartomancienne	Juliette Tacchino
Le Mari	Erik Tofte
Monsieur Lacouf	Hongrui Ren
Monsieur Presto	Morgan-Andrew King
Le Gendarme	Evan Gray
La Marchande de journaux	Judy Zhuo
Le Journaliste	Landry Allen
Le Fils	Jackson Allen
Une Dame	Shikta Mukherjee
La Dame élégante	Juliet Rand
Le Monsieur barbu	Yulin Yan

The Seven Deadly Sins

(Sung in German with English supertitles)

Anna I	Katie Trigg
Anna II	Maya Mor Mitrani
Brother	Evan Gray
Mother	Morgan-Andrew King
Father	Hongrui Ren
Brother	Landry Allen

TICKETS

Tickets and subscriptions are on sale now. Single tickets starting at \$19 are available at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

Fully staged production with members of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, sung in French and German with English supertitles for *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* by Celeste Montemarano and English supertitles for *The Seven Deadly Sins* by Danielle Sinclar.

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

This performance is funded in part by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc., New York, NY

#