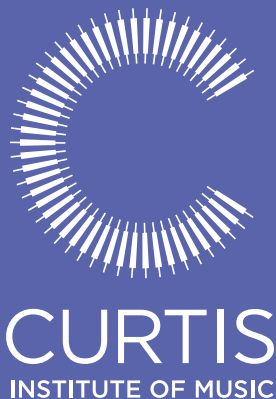


CURTIS
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

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

NOVEMBER 18 & 20, 2022



2022
2023
SEASON
MADE WITH LOVE

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CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC
1726 Locust Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

www.Curtis.edu

PATRON SERVICES
(215) 893-7902
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WELCOME

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first Curtis Opera Theatre production of the 2022–23 school year: Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. These incredibly talented artists are some of the most promising young musicians from across the globe. But while their talent is unmistakable, what perhaps truly sets them apart is their unparalleled enthusiasm and excitement for making music together, and we can't wait to share that joy with you here.

The 153 young musicians who make up the Curtis student body this year come from 19 countries and 28 states. Some have only been at Curtis for two months—and yet they are already working seamlessly together on stage. This is the epitome of Curtis's "learn by doing" philosophy.

We are incredibly excited to bring you *The Turn of the Screw* this weekend, as well as our productions of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* and Handel's *Ariodante* coming up later this year. And there are so many other Curtis performances ahead of us—here in Philadelphia and around the U.S. and the world. We hope you can join us often.

Of course, all of these performances are made possible thanks to the generous support of friends like you. We are immensely grateful for the time and resources that you invest in our students and our school. Thank you for all you do for Curtis.

All my very best,



Roberto Díaz
PRESIDENT

Nina von Maltzahn President's Chair
James and Betty Matarese Chair in Viola Studies



ABOUT CURTIS

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 makes an investment in the artistic potential of its students, providing them with

full-tuition scholarships and need-based grants for living expenses to ensure that each student can enter the profession without educational debt.

In a typical year, Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings and programs that bring arts access and education to the community. This real-world training allows these extraordinary young musicians to join the front rank of performers, composers, conductors, and musical leaders, making a profound impact on music onstage and in their communities.

To learn more, visit **Curtis.edu**.

ABOUT THE CURTIS OPERA THEATRE

The **Curtis Opera Theatre** has become known for imaginative productions, bold concepts, and absorbing theatre. Under the artistic direction of Eric Owens, 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.



CURTIS OPERA THEATRE

PRESENTS

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

Music Benjamin Britten

Libretto Myfanwy Piper

Michelle Rofrano, *conductor*

Chas Rader-Shieber, *director*

Steven Kemp, *set designer*

Susan Branch Towne, *costume designer*

Jacob Hughes, *lighting designer*

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

Sunday November 20 at 2:30 p.m.

Philadelphia Film Center

This production runs approximately 2 hours and 4 minutes, including one intermission after Act I.

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

Supertitles provided by Celeste Montemarano Alexander.

The Turn of the Screw music used by arrangement with Boosey and Hawkes.

Photographic and recording equipment may not be used in the Philadelphia Film Center theater.

CAST

in order of appearance

Prologue	Sam Higgins
Governess	Olivia Smith
Flora	Maya Mor Mitrani
Miles	Cavan Hurley (<i>guest artist</i>)
Mrs. Grose	Emily Damasco
Peter Quint	Ben Schaefer
Miss Jessel	Emilie Kealani

ORCHESTRA

Violin I Kate Arndt	Flute Eunah Kim	Timpani and Percussion Hamza Able Zachary Thomas
Violin II Sammy Andonian	Oboe Mekhi Gladden	Harp Claire Thai
Viola Grace Takeda	Clarinet Alexander Ehrlich-Herzog	Piano Reese Revak
Cello Zachary Mowitz	Bassoon Asha Kline	
Double Bass Tobias Vigneau	Horn Christine Ott Nicholas Ivy	

SYNOPSIS

By George Hall

Act One

Prologue

Scene One

On her journey to Bly, the Governess ponders her position's uncertainties: the orphaned children, the old housekeeper, and her instructions not to contact her charges' only relative.

Scene Two

The children—Miles and Flora—together with the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, welcome the Governess; Mrs. Grose assures her they are clever and good. The Governess feels at home.

Scene Three

When she receives a letter from Miles's school dismissing him as "an injury to his friends", Mrs. Grose's protestations and the sight of the children playing reassure her; she decides to ignore it.

Scene Four

Enjoying a warm summer evening in the grounds, the Governess sees a figure on the tower whom she at first imagines to be the children's relative. But it is not. She suspects it may be a madman or intruder.

Scene Five

As the children are playing indoors, the Governess sees the man again, gazing in at the window. Mrs. Grose identifies him as Quint, the master's former valet and Miles's companion, who "made free" with the Governess's predecessor, Miss Jessel. Both are now dead. Horror-struck, the Governess fears that he has come back for Miles, and swears to protect the children. Mrs. Grose offers her support.

Scene Six

During the children's lesson, Miles sings a strange song; he asks the Governess if she likes it.

Scene Seven

Sitting by the lake with Flora, the Governess sees her staring at Miss Jessel, who has appeared on the other side. Sending Flora away, the Governess believes that both children are lost.

Scene Eight

At night in the garden, Quint calls to Miles, and Miss Jessel to Flora. The Governess comes upon them as the ghosts disappear and asks Miles what he is doing. "You see, I am bad," he answers.



Act Two

Scene One

Quint and Jessel converse—she accusing him of betrayal; he speaking of the friend he seeks. The Governess admits that she is lost in a labyrinth.

Scene Two

In the churchyard, the children emulate choirboys. The Governess tells Mrs. Grose that they are complicit with Quint and Jessel. She has a disconcerting conversation with Miles and thinks he is challenging her to act.

Scene Three

In the schoolroom, the Governess finds Miss Jessel, who says to her that she cannot rest. She writes a letter to her employer telling him what has occurred. In Miles's bedroom, she tells him that she has written to his guardian. Quint calls to him. The candle goes out; Miles says that it was he who extinguished it.

Scene Five

Quint's voice is heard encouraging Miles to retrieve the letter. He complies.

Scene Six

During Miles's piano practice, the Governess realizes that Flora has slipped away—to meet, she suspects, Miss Jessel. She and Mrs. Grose go in search of her.

Scene Seven

At the lake, the Governess accuses Flora of seeing Miss Jessel, who remains invisible to Mrs. Grose. Flora denies it, and Mrs. Grose leads her away. The Governess fears she has lost the housekeeper's support.

Scene Eight

After a horrendous night with Flora, Mrs. Grose prepares to remove her; she also informs the Governess that Miles has stolen the letter.

The Governess confronts Miles. Quint—at first unseen, then visible—warns him to remain silent. She forces Miles to name who made him take the letter. Miles blurts out “Peter Quint, you devil!”, collapsing in the Governess's arms. Realizing he is dead, she sings the strange song he once sang to her. ♦



CONDUCTOR'S Q&A

By Ryan Scott Lathan

What musical and theatrical aspects of *The Turn of the Screw* do you find most rewarding?

The fascinating thing about this ghost story, and what's so interesting about Henry James's original story, is its ambiguity. Are the ghosts real, or are they a metaphor for evil? Is the Governess a completely unreliable narrator, and did she go crazy and imagine them? Over the years, people have confirmed that it's the ambiguity that makes it so scary and brilliant. The audience can draw their own conclusion about whether it's all real or not.

The opera is famously built on a twelve-tone row, the "screw theme," with three sections of tetrachords, fifths, and minor thirds covering all twelve tones. The variations are all linked by a step, so it's this literal musical turning of the theme. It appears in different ways and clusters and returns at the end for the final climactic moment. The variation, theme, and leitmotif of each character are also generally very tonal. Discovering all of this for the first time and seeing how it works and builds the tension is just so cool.

I looked it up, and the expression "the turn of the screw" comes from a type of torture. Prisoners were forced to turn a crank, and a guard would tighten it so that it was harder each time. Something bad happens, and then something worse piles on top of that, so the tension tightens. I also read a quote that Britten came up with the "screw theme" and then was actively trying to build out everything from there. By the end, he found it hard to compose. He likened it to squeezing toothpaste out of a tube when there's no toothpaste left. He built this box for himself that he had to fit in—keys, theme, and chord-wise—but then needed help with how to keep the themes unique. He managed to do it successfully. Every time I open the score, I find new things.

This is your conducting debut here at Curtis. What has been your experience since you arrived for rehearsals?

I've been so impressed by the level of musicianship. At the first read, everyone sounded so good. I look at my job as, how do I help this be a cohesive story and performance, and how do I help everyone do their best? These singers and instrumentalists, despite being in school, know more about their instruments than I ever will. They are the singer and the violinist on their way to becoming real experts. That's what rehearsals are for—all the little details and how we fit them together—I try to shape it into this long cohesive, dramatic musical line of a story.

What elements of Britten's score do you hope audiences will take with them from experiencing your interpretation of *The Turn of the Screw*?

Listen for the musical themes, the leitmotifs. Each character has different themes that return, specifically the ghosts. Quint has this A-flat major key signature, E-flat Mixolydian, technically. The theme comes in the celesta, so it's this ringing, high-pitched sound. It's very ominous. Miss Jessel's theme sounds like a rising from the deep, appearing across the lake out of the mist, a polyrhythm that starts with the lower instruments—triplets and sixteenths—and they all build on each other, followed by a gong.

Listen for the 'Malo' song that Miles sings and *The Turn of the Screw* theme right after the prologue. These themes come back in such a way that builds the drama, so listening for them really makes the opera. The goal is to build the tension and suspense of this ghost story all the way to the end. I hope people walk away feeling like they just saw the best, scariest movie, but it's an opera with all this beautiful music, so you're also emotionally invested in the outcome. ♦



BIOGRAPHIES

Creative Team

Michelle Rofrano

Conductor

Michelle Rofrano is an Italian-American conductor with a keen interest in the intersection of art, storytelling, and social activism. An avid opera conductor, she is the music and artistic director of City Lyric Opera, a women-led company in NYC. Recent and upcoming projects include conducting Glass's *The Fall of the House of Usher* with Orpheus PDX, covering *Dream of the Red Chamber* with San Francisco Opera and the world premiere of *Proximity* with Lyric Opera of Chicago, leading Menotti's *Amelia al Ballo* with Juilliard Opera, and conducting *La traviata* with City Lyric Opera. Previous engagements include leading *The Queen of Spades* and *Trouble in Tahiti* with The Glimmerglass Festival; Telemann's *Don Quichotte* at Comacho's Wedding with Opera Saratoga; the New York premiere of Viardot's *Cendrillon* with City Lyric Opera; and *Così fan tutte* and *The Turn of the Screw* with DC Public Opera. She has served as assistant conductor for productions with Juilliard Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Opera Saratoga, Florida Grand Opera, and Opera Birmingham. Ms. Rofrano is the Founder and Artistic Director of PROTESTRA, an activist orchestra that advocates for social justice through classical music.

Chas Rader-Shieber

Director

Stage Director Chas Rader-Shieber is known both for his bold and inventive productions and for his acute musical instincts. Mr. Rader-Shieber's 2022–23 season began with a debut for Orpheus PDX, directing a new production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*. Later in the season, he mounts a new production of Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt* with Opera Colorado.

A favorite among summer festivals, Mr. Rader-Shieber returns to Des Moines Metro Opera in 2023 to direct a new production of Sergei Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*. Recent credits there include Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Rameau's *Plateée*, *Rusalka*, Gluck's *Orfeo*, and *Die Entführung aus dem serial*.

Mr. Rader-Shieber's productions have been seen around the world, at houses such as Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Washington National Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Theatre St. Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and many more.

Steven Kemp

Set Designer

Steven C. Kemp is a set designer for opera, theatre, and events. His over 100 designs for opera have been presented at 31 companies including Atlanta Opera, Arizona Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Utah Opera, Sarasota Opera, New Orleans Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Des Moines Metro Opera, Central City Opera, and Opera Theatre of St. Louis. His 24 designs for Opera San Jose include the West Coast premieres of *Anna Karenina* and *Silent Night* as well as the acclaimed productions of *Idomeneo* and Alma Deutscher's *Cinderella*. He has designed over 50 productions in New York City including the Off-Broadway revival of *Tick, Tick... Boom!* as well as numerous productions for regional theaters, cruise ships, and international tours such as the current *Baby Shark Live!*. Early in his career he worked extensively as an associate designer including designs for 10 Broadway productions, Disney Theatricals, Dreamworks, Holland America Line, and the Metropolitan Opera. Mr. Kemp received his M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego.

Susan Branch Towne

Costume Designer

Susan Branch Towne is a native of Austin, TX, where she has designed for Ballet Austin, Austin Opera, and over 30 productions at Zach Theatre. Her costume designs have been seen on stages across the country, including New York City Opera, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Denver Center Theatre Company, Syracuse Stage, Geva Theatre, Pioneer Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, Utah Shakespearean Festival, Skylight Music Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, Lake George Opera Festival, Connecticut Repertory Theatre, New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, Riverside Theatre, Harvard and Cornell Universities, and for numerous companies Off-Broadway. Ms. Towne has been on faculty at St. Edward's University in Austin since 2012. She holds a B.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon and an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Drama, and has been a member of United Scenic Artists, Local 829, since 1986.

Jacob Hughes

Lighting Designer

Jacob Hughes is from Dallas, TX, and is thrilled to be working with Curtis Institute of Music on this exciting piece with a such a great team. He has spent the last three years living in Washington, D.C. while earning his M.F.A. in design and was the assistant lighting designer for Des Moines Opera's 49th season. Mr. Hughes thanks his friends and family for the support network during the last few years.

Brittany Rappise

Hair and Makeup Supervisor

Brittany Rappise is based in Pensacola, Fla., and travels from Delaware to Des Moines with her wigs. She returns to Curtis for her second season after *Così fan tutte* last spring. Ms. Rappise has spent six seasons with Opera Delaware on productions like *Così fan tutte*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Amleto*, *Semiramide*, and *Scalia/Ginsburg*. This summer was her first with Des Moines Metro Opera designing for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and her 11th with Brevard Music Center in N.C. Ms. Rappise is thrilled to work this season on *L'elisir d'amor* and *Ariodante* (Curtis); *La traviata* (Opera Delaware); *La bohème* and *Carousel* (Pensacola Opera).

A N.J. native, Brittany earned her M.F.A. from the University of North Carolina school of the Arts and her B.F.A. from the University of West Florida. She also teaches workshops and builds wigs for universities, theaters, and entertainment companies across the country including Busch Gardens, Disney, and *Saturday Night Live*.

Sarah Goshman

Production Stage Manager

Sarah Goshman is thrilled to be working with Curtis for the first time. Favorite credits include: *Tosca* (Opera Carolina); *The Medium* and *A Hand of Bridge* (Hofstra Opera Theatre); *King Lear* and *Trouble in Mind* (Utah Shakespeare Festival); *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* (National Tour); *Another Rose* (Virgin Voyages); *BUDDY: The Buddy Holly Story* (Florida Rep); *Disaster!*, *Kinky Boots*, and *The Addams Family* (Weathervane Theatre); *A Chorus Line* (Reagle Music Theatre); *RENT* and *Other Desert Cities* (John W. Engeman Theatre); *I See London, I See France* (NYMF); and three seasons at Stamford Theatre Works. Sarah Goshman is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

BIOGRAPHIES

Singers

Soprano **Emily Damasco** (Mrs. Grose), from Glen Mills, Pa., entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2018, studying voice with Dolora Zajick and is the Carol S. and Howard L. Lidz Fellow. Curtis Opera Theatre credits include *Dido and Aeneas* (Sorceress), *Riders to the Sea* (Maurya), *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Berta), *Così fan tutte* (Fiordiligi), and Opera OnDemand. Ms. Damasco recently collaborated with SoundLAB and the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University on the “Lost Time” music project. She has participated in programs such as Houston Grand Opera’s Young Artists’ Vocal Academy, Dolora Zajick’s Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, School of Creative and Performing Arts acting program, Sherrill Milnes Teen Voice Program at the Savannah VOICE Festival, Interlochen Summer Arts Camp, and Curtis Summerfest. She was featured in WHY?’s *On Stage at Curtis* in 2021.

Countertenor **Sam Higgins** (Prologue), from Milton, Mass., entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2021, studying voice with adjunct faculty member Julia Faulkner, and is the Arthur Tracy Fellow. Awards include prizes in the National Association of Teachers of Singing National Student Auditions, Schmidt Vocal Competition, Fidelity Investments Young Artists Competition from the Boston Pops and the 2020 Classical Singer Competition. Mr. Higgins appeared on NPR’s *From the Top* and was featured in *Classical Singer* magazine. He participated in the Metropolitan Opera Guild High School Singers Intensive and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Young Artist Vocal Program. He was a member of the Boston Symphony Children’s Choir and Boston City Singers. Mr. Higgins has performed as a soloist with ensembles such as the New England Philharmonic, Polymnia Choral Society, and Coro Allegro.

Cavan Hurley (Miles), from West Chester, Pa., makes his opera debut in this production. He is in his sixth year with the Philadelphia Boys Choir, where he performed on the *Today* show, CBS, and for Phillies and Flyers opening days.

Soprano **Emilie Kealani** (Miss Jessel), from San Francisco, entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2022, studying opera with Joan Patenaude-Yarnell, and is the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Fellow. She recently made her professional debut with the Santa Fe Opera as an apprentice artist, performing in productions of *Carmen*, *Falstaff*, and the world premiere of *M. Butterfly*. In their renowned Apprentice Scenes program, she also portrayed the roles of Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*). Holding a bachelor’s degree from the Manhattan School of Music, Ms. Kealani is the winner of numerous awards from organizations, including the Gerda Lissner Foundation, National Shirley Rabb Winston Scholarship, Beach Blanket Babylon, and Schmidt Vocal Arts.

Soprano **Maya Mor Mitrani** (Flora), from Tzur Moshe, Israel, entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2021, studying voice with adjunct faculty member Julia Faulkner, and is the Horace W. Goldsmith Fellow. A fellow of the Ronen Foundation, Ms. Mor Mitrani has participated in the Jerusalem Music Centre in Mishkenot Sha’ananim’s Programme for Outstanding Singers and David Goldman Chamber Music Programme for Outstanding Young Musicians. She was also part of a pilot program for gifted and outstanding musicians from the Israeli Ministry of Education. As a soloist, Ms. Mor Mitrani has performed with the Moran Choir and the Thelma Yellin Choir in Israel. Other notable performances include those with the Kfar-Saba Chamber Orchestra, the Israeli Andalusian Orchestra–Ashdod, the Thelma Yellin Symphonic Orchestra, and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Tenor **Ben Schaefer** (Peter Quint), from Des Moines, Iowa, entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2019, studying opera with adjunct faculty members Patricia McCaffrey and Mark Schnaible, and is the Mitchell Family Fellow. Credits include *Albert Herring* (Sid) and *The Barber of Seville* (Figaro) with the Curtis Opera Theatre; *The Ghosts of Versailles* (Figaro) with the Royal Opera of Versailles; *The Ghosts of Versailles* (Figaro), *The Barber of Seville* (Fiorello), and *The Queen of Spades* (Yeletsky) at the Glimmerglass Festival; *La traviata* (Barone Douphol) and *Die Fledermaus* (Eisenstein) with Palm Beach Opera as part of the Beneson Young Artist Program; *La fanciulla del West* (Il Postiglione) for Arizona Opera; *Dead Man Walking* (Older Brother) for Des Moines Metro Opera; and several roles at Rice University and Simpson College. Mr. Schaefer recently won second prize and the Sylvia Busse Award in the annual Houston Saengerbund Competition for German singing.

Soprano **Olivia Smith** (Governess), from Kelowna, British Columbia, entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2017, studying voice with adjunct faculty member Julia Faulkner, and is the William Horne Fellow. Curtis Opera Theatre credits include *Così fan tutte* (Fiordiligi, cover), *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Berta), *Riders to the Sea* (Cathleen), *Dido and Aeneas* (First Witch), *The Medium* (Mrs. Gobineau). With the Merola Opera Program, she sang the role of Margarita Xirgu in scenes from *Ainadamar* and covered the role of Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*. In early 2023, she joins San Francisco Opera's Adler Fellowship program. Ms. Smith has attended Houston Grand Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy and participated in HGO's Eleanor McCollum Competition, where she received the Online Viewer's Choice and the Anna Maria Martinez Encouragement Award. Ms. Smith has also won the Vanderlaan Prize in Grand Rapids, Mich., and an encouragement grant from the George London Competition. ♦



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Hao Zhou, violin
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