

WASHINGTON
NATIONAL OPERA



THE CRUCIBLE

March 21, 23, 25, 27 & 29, 2026

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
LISNER AUDITORIUM

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WASHINGTON
NATIONAL **OPERA**

Timothy O'Leary
General Director

Francesca Zambello
Artistic Director

Robert Spano
Music Director

PRESENTS

THE CRUCIBLE

MUSIC BY
Robert Ward

LIBRETTO BY
Bernard Stambler

BASED ON THE PLAY BY
Arthur Miller

In English with projected English titles
This performance is approximately 150 minutes, including one 25-minute intermission.

WNO's production of *The Crucible* is possible by a generous gift from
Denise Littlefield Sobel.

Additional support generously provided by Ted Snowdon and Duffy Violante.

J'Nai Bridges and Ryan McKinny are generously sponsored by the Halfp Windham Foundation.

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GENERAL DYNAMICS

Jacqueline Badger Mars
Dallas Morse Coors

Welcome Letter



Dear Friends,

Welcome to our second presentation of 2026, the year we celebrate both the American semiquincentennial and the 70th birthday of Washington National Opera.

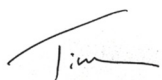
A few years ago, as we began to think about how to mark this celebratory year, we decided to offer you a trio of American stories—*Treemonisha*, *The Crucible*, and *West Side Story*—that are as varied as our nation itself, from their musical styles to the stories they tell. Each of these shows takes us on an incredible emotional journey and offers the opportunity to reflect on where we have been and where we are going. Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*, which we presented earlier this month, considers the power of education and the potential of a woman to lead her community. Later this spring, we will revisit Leonard Bernstein's mid-20th-century urban riff on *Romeo and Juliet*, a story he called "an out and out plea for tolerance." With *The Crucible*, for which composer Robert Ward won the Pulitzer Prize for Music, we zoom in on the perils of mob mentality and (forgive the anachronism) "fake news."

Theater has always functioned as a kind of mirror, giving us the opportunity to reckon with the full spectrum of human potential. During the "Red Scare" of the 1950s, the playwright Arthur Miller responded to current events by reaching back into history to write *The Crucible*. The Tony Award-winning play immediately struck a chord; it has been adapted for film, TV, ballet, and the opera that unfolds here.

The story is not an easy one. But for us, the presentation of difficult stories is an expression of unfettered optimism and belief in the promise of America. At Washington National Opera, we are committed to providing space for reflection and dialogue. As John F. Kennedy famously said, we will be remembered "not for our victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contributions to the human spirit."

Arthur Miller wrote, "Political movements are always trying to position themselves as shields against the unknown—vote for me and you're safe." For us at WNO, the unknown is equal parts unsettling and galvanizing. As we chart a course for the years ahead, we remain firmly committed to providing space for dialogue with you about who we are and what we wish to become. We are heartened by—and grateful for—your loyal support.

Warmly,



Timothy O'Leary
General Director and CEO of WNO



Francesca Zambello
Artistic Director of WNO

Cast & Creative Team

THE CRUCIBLE

Music by Robert Ward
Libretto by Bernard Stambler
Based on the play by Arthur Miller
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ELIZABETH PROCTOR | **J'Nai Bridges**
JOHN PROCTOR | **Ryan McKinny**
ABIGAIL WILLIAMS | **Lauren Carroll**[^]
TITUBA | **Ronnita Miller**^{*}
JUDGE DANFORTH | **Chauncey Packer**
REVEREND JOHN HALE | **Robert Frazier**[^]
REVEREND SAMUEL PARRIS | **Alexander McKissick**^{^^}
REBECCA NURSE | **Michelle Mariposa**[^]
FRANCIS NURSE | **Atticus Rego**[^]
EZEKIEL CHEEVER | **Joshua Dennis**
GILES COREY | **Nicholas Huff**[^]
MARY WARREN | **Kresley Figueroa**^{^^}
ANN PUTNAM | **Tiffany Choe**^{^^}
THOMAS PUTNAM | **Chandler Benn**[^]
SARAH GOOD / RUTH PUTNAM | **Anneliese Klenetsky**[^]
BETTY PARRIS | **Veronica Siebert**[^]
SUSANNA WALCOTT | **Alexandra Christoforakis**

WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR | **Robert Spano**
DIRECTOR | **Francesca Zambello**
SET DESIGNER | **Neil Patel**
ORIGINAL LIGHTING DESIGNER | **Mark McCullough**
LIGHTING DESIGNER | **Jason Lynch**
COSTUME DESIGNER | **Jessica Jahn**
SOUND DESIGNER | **Mark Rivet**
ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHER | **Eric Sean Fogel**
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR & CHOREOGRAPHER | **Andrea Beasom**
SURTTITLES | **Corinne M. Hayes**
INTIMACY COORDINATOR | **Lorraine Ressegger-Slone**
COVER CONDUCTOR | **William Long**
ASSISTANT CONDUCTORS | **Michael Baitzer, Nicole Cloutier**
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR / DICTION COACH | **Ken Weiss**

This production was originally created for The Glimmerglass Festival
Sound effects by Joel T. Morain originally for The Glimmerglass Festival

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- * Washington National Opera Debut
- [^] Member, Cafritz Young Artists program
- ^{^^} Alumni, Cafritz Young Artists program

Synopsis

As Betty Parris, the daughter of Reverend Samuel Parris, lies in bed with a mysterious illness, rumors of witchcraft begin to spread in Salem Village. Abigail Williams, Parris' niece, admits that she and some other girls danced in the forest, but insists there was nothing more to it. As other villagers gather, it becomes clear that there are many long-simmering resentments among them. Tituba, a slave in the Parris household, is coerced into admitting witchcraft; she insists that she has refused the Devil's entreaties.

Tituba's words are seen as a confession to occult dealings, and Reverend Hale declares Satan's power broken. But the town has been possessed by the idea that Satan is at work in their midst. A court is convened to try suspected witches with the assistance of several young girls, Abigail Williams among them. Inevitably, the girls cry out and fall to the floor in the presence of anyone accused.

John Proctor, who once had an affair with Abigail Williams, knows the trial is a farce, but hesitates to challenge Abigail out of fear that she will publicly accuse him of lechery. His wife, Elizabeth Proctor, is the next to be arrested for witchcraft. John confronts Abigail, who urges him to leave his wife and join her in the "holy work" of examining witches. Other villagers attempt to discredit the girls, only to find themselves accused. Denial of an accusation is a hanging offense; only by confessing can a suspect save his or her life.

In an attempt to break the girls' power, John Proctor finally confesses his affair with Abigail and declares it the motivation for her actions. When Abigail refuses to answer the charges, Elizabeth Proctor is brought into the courtroom. Not knowing her husband has confessed his affair, she lies to avoid incriminating him. Declared innocent of lechery, John is quickly accused and found guilty of witchcraft; he joins the many imprisoned villagers who await hanging.

A month later, Abigail visits the jail to set John free; she speaks of escaping Salem together, but he refuses. John is offered one last chance to save his life by confessing; after much soul-searching, he decides he will give a false, oral confession to save his life; however, when he is asked to sign a document and implicate others, he refuses.

Background

By Kelly Rourke

“I have wondered if one of the reasons [*The Crucible*] continues like this is its symbolic unleashing of the specter of order’s fragility,” wrote Arthur Miller in 1989. “When certainties evaporate with each dawn, the unknowable is always around the corner. We know how much depends on mere trust and good faith and a certain respect for the human person, and how easily breached these are. And we know as well how close to the edge we live and how weak we really are and how quickly swept by fear the mass of us can become when our panic button is pushed. It is also, I suppose, that the play reaffirms the ultimate power of courage and clarity of mind whose ultimate fruit is liberty.”

In 1953, Miller’s dramatization of the Salem witch trials was his response to the “Red Scare” of the mid-20th century. More than 250 years earlier, the beleaguered residents of the precarious settlement at Salem Village had seen their everyday fears billow into full-blown hysteria about sinister forces at work in their midst. Although not an exact analogy for the anti-Communist crusade, the parallels were clear to Miller, who was himself called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities: “We were all behaving differently than we used to; we had drunk from the cup of suspicion of one another; people inevitably were afraid of too close an association with someone who might one day fall afoul of some committee.”

More than four decades after *The Crucible*’s premiere, Miller’s historical play, intended to comment on then-current American events, had been produced again and again against backdrops of political strife—in Latin America, Soviet Georgia,

Aftereffects



Events in the Salem witch trials moved swiftly at the height of hysteria in early 1692. Accusations mounted in February and March; the first execution, of Bridget Bishop, took place on June 10, and the last hangings, were in September. Others accused were released from jail by the middle of 1693. In 1711, the Province of Massachusetts Bay nullified convictions and offered compensation to families.

It might be surprising to learn that effects have lingered into the 21st century. It was only in 2001 that Massachusetts cleared the name of Bridget Bishop. And in 2022, Elizabeth Johnson, Jr., was the last convicted “witch” to be fully exonerated. A memorial at Proctor’s Ledge, the site of executions, was dedicated in 2017, taking the form of stones etched with names of those wrongfully put to death.

South Africa (where Tituba was portrayed by a white woman in blackface) and Shanghai, where it caused Nien Cheng, the 70-year-old author of *Life and Death in Shanghai*, to remark, “I could not believe the play was not written by a Chinese, because the questions of the court were exactly the same ones the Cultural Revolutionaries had put to me!”

Fear of the unknown may have sparked the crisis in Salem Village, but the conflagration was kindled and fed by a complex of political and personal struggles. The settlement, some miles inland from the more prosperous Salem Town, had only recently been granted limited elements of self-governance. As Patrick Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum write in *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*, “What made Salem Village disputes so notorious, and ultimately so destructive, was the fact that the structural defects in its organization rendered the Village almost helpless in coping with whatever disputes might arise.”

And the disputes that arose in that bleak environment were many. Villagers quarreled over land rights, over the compensation due to their minister, over public and private comportment. While the specter of the Devil at work in their midst was terrifying, the diagnosis must have come to a secret relief to those who wondered why God had permitted the community to suffer as it did. Miscarriages, a “urinary difficulty,” a lame ox, a stray dog, an injured foot—all these afflictions suddenly had a cause. The talk of the Devil’s work magnified his presence; many began to report nighttime visitations, either from the Devil himself or from specters of neighbors deputized to do his work. After long, sleepless nights, people reported visions of fireballs, sounds of mysterious scampering, a “brimstone stink.”

The legal apparatus of nearby Salem Town, which had been unwilling to intervene in some of the previous, petty Village disputes, finally had to take notice. The Court of Oyer and Terminer convened in June 1692. Two gestures in *The Crucible*’s first act summarize the nature of the witch hunt: When Abigail is accused of witchcraft,

What Sparks a Witch Hunt?



Detail from *The Examination of a Witch* by T.H. Matterson

Since 2017, the Salem Witch Hunt Museum in Massachusetts has asked visitors to consider patterns of behavior that have sparked witch hunts, from 1692 to the present, using this formula:

fear + a trigger = a scapegoat

A scapegoat is defined as a person who is unfairly or irrationally the object of blame.

Examples can be viewed, or added to, under the Witch Hunt Wall Project at salemwitchmuseum.com

she is able to escape the charges by pointing her finger at another—Tituba—who is herself able to avoid condemnation by making a full confession. The plausibility of the accusation and the confession were irrelevant.

In *Naming Names*, an examination of the investigations of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, Victor S. Navasky asserts that the desire for names was less about gathering evidence than determining “whether the ‘criminals’ had truly repented of their evil ways. Only by a witness’s naming names and giving details, it was said, could the Committee be certain that his break with the past was genuine. The demand for names was not a quest for evidence; it was a test of character. The naming of names had shifted from a means to an end.”

Naming names offered villagers an opportunity to save themselves; it also served as a kind of payback for perceived or real injustices. In *The Crucible*’s opening scene, we see hints of some of the long-simmering feuds that came to a full boil during this time. Reverend Parris did not enjoy unanimous support among the villagers, and his compensation was the subject of ongoing debate. Members of the prosperous Putnam family were seen as land-grabbers and resented by many. John Proctor, who kept a tavern, lived just south of the Village boundaries and did not regularly attend its church. Most of the elements of Miller’s drama are present in the historical record; the playwright’s one significant invention is the affair between John Proctor and Abigail Williams, who was around 11 years old at the time of the trials.

And what of those young girls, who sent so many innocents to their death? What could have motivated their participation in such a monstrous affair? Stacey Schiff, author of *The Witches: Salem 1692*, points out that their strict upbringing may have made adolescent girls of Salem Village even more susceptible to flights of fancy than their modern-day counterparts. “From those things the devil promised,” she writes, referring to the girls’ accounts, “we can glimpse what the seventeenth-century girl dreamed of: splendid finery, travel abroad, fashion books, leisure, gold, a husband, help with the housework. Her longings differed little from those of any other orphaned semi-adolescent farm girl stalled in a bleak, storm-prone landscape where animals strayed into the gardens of peevish neighbors who turned up on the doorstep to fulminate, disabling the adults of the house. Insofar as they dared to dream, these girls dreamed—at the ashen end of a New England winter—of journeys to exotic realms in supersaturated color.”

In all, 19 Salem villagers were put to death before the trials were halted. The last of them was Giles Corey, who was executed by having heavy stones piled on his body. Seventeen days later, six accused witches were released on bail from Salem Prison, but it was not until the following May, nearly eight months later, that the final prisoners were released. Shortly afterward, Anne Putnam, Jr. (renamed Ruth in the opera) stated, “I desire to be humbled before God... that I, then being in my childhood, should... be made an instrument for the accusation of several persons of a grievous crime, whereby their lives were taken away from them... I now have

just grounds and good reason to believe they were innocent persons.” She was the only one of the girls to make such a statement.

Reflecting on the situation that inspired the play, Miller wrote, “Political movements are always trying to position themselves as shields against the unknown—vote for me and you’re safe. The difference during witch hunts is that you are being made safe from a malign, debauched, evil, irreligious, wife-swapping, deceitful, immoral, stinking conspiracy stemming from the very bowels of hell.” While the mid-century fear of Communism may have had more basis in reality than the Puritans’ fear of witches, both investigations offered a cautionary tale about human nature. As Miller put it, “The truth is that the more I worked at this dilemma the less it had to do with Communists and McCarthy and the more it concerned something very fundamental in the human animal: the fear of the unknown, and particularly the dread of social isolation.”

—Kelley Rourke, for The Glimmerglass Festival production of *The Crucible*, 2016

Director’s Note

The Salem witch trials serve as a critical historical example of the dangers of mass hysteria, scapegoating, and the breakdown of due process, which led to the persecution and execution of innocent people. They highlight the importance of protecting individual rights and the dangers of fear, ignorance, and intolerance in society.

The witch trials underscore the significance of the rule of law, including procedural protections such as the requirement of indictment by a grand jury (in the case of criminal charges), the protection against self-incrimination, the right to jury trial, and the right to confront witnesses. These protections are found in the amendments to the US Constitution referred to as the Bill of Rights.

These events had lasting effects on the American legal system and continue to serve as a cautionary tale in American history and literature. The analogies to our contemporary society resonate throughout this work. We ask you to draw your own conclusions from this powerful and dark time of our history as interpreted by Arthur Miller, Bernard Stambler and Robert Ward.

—Francesca Zambello

Meet the Artists



J'Nai Bridges

MEZZO-SOPRANO | ELIZABETH PROCTOR

WNO History: *Written in Stone*, 2021–2022; *Samson and Deliah* (Delilah), 2019–2020

Past: *Carmen* (title role), Vienna State Opera; *Rigoletto* (Maddalena), *El Niño* (Mary), Metropolitan Opera; *Les Troyens*, (Didon), Seattle Opera; *Neruda Songs* (Lincoln Center); National Symphony Orchestra; Symphony Tacoma, Minnesota Orchestra, Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Detroit Symphony Orchestra; Verdi's Requiem, Trinity Church; artist in residence, Kaufman Music Center



Ryan McKinny

BASS-BARITONE | JOHN PROCTOR

WNO History: *Don Giovanni* (title role), 2019–2020; *The Marriage of Figaro* (Figaro), 2016–2017; *The Ring Cycle* (Donner and Gunther) 2015–2016

Past: *Dead Man Walking* (Joseph De Rocher), San Francisco Opera, Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Il trittico* (Michele, Gianni Schicchi), *Silent Night* (Lieutenant Horstmayer), Houston Grand Opera; *Carmen* (Escamillo), Cincinnati Opera, Semperoper Dresden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Hamburg; *Bluebeard's Castle* (title role), Omaha Symphony, Opera Omaha; *Don Giovanni* (title role), Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra



Lauren Carroll

SOPRANO | ABIGAIL WILLIAMS

WNO History: *The Little Prince* (The Rose), *Aida* (Priestess), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Barbarina), 2025–2026

Past: *The Marriage of Figaro* (Babarina), *Roméo et Juliette* (Juliette, cover), *La traviata* (Violetta, cover), Palm Beach Opera; *Così fan tutte* (Fiordiligi), Aspen Music Festival; *Carmen* (Frasquita, cover), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helena, cover), Des Moines Metro Opera; National Semifinalist, Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition; third-prize winner, 2025 Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition for Young Singers



Ronnita Miller

MEZZO-SOPRANO | TITUBA

WNO History: WNO debut

Past: *Die frau ohne Schatten* (Voice from Above), *Les contes d'Hoffman* (Antonio's mother, cover), *Euridyce* (Big Stone), Metropolitan Opera; *Das Rheingold* (Erda), Atlanta Opera, Pacific Symphony; *Siegfried* (Erda), Lyric Opera of Chicago; *This Little Light of Mine* (Fanny Lou Hamer), Kentucky Opera; *Die Walküre* (Fricka), Amsterdam Concertgebouw; *X: The Life and Times of Malcom X* (Ella), Detroit Opera, Omaha Opera



Chauncey Packer

TENOR | JUDGE DANFORTH

WNO History: *Porgy and Bess* (Sportin' Life), 2024–2025

Past: *Morgiane* (Ali), *La bohème* (Rodolfo), *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (Spinner), *La traviata* (Alfredo), *Dead Man Walking* (Howard Boucher), *Guys and Dolls* (Nathan Detroit), *Champion* (Luis Rodrigo), *Falstaff* (Bardolfo), *Hansel and Gretel* (The Witch), *Tosca* (Cavaradossi), *The Mother of Us All* (Jo the Loiterer), *Madama Butterfly* (Pinkerton), *Treemonisha* (Remus), *Die Zauberflöte* (Tamino, Monostatos), *Der fliegende Holländer* (Steuermann), *Manon Lescaut* (Edmondo), *Akhnaten* (Amon High Priest), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Arturo), *Die Fledermaus* (Dr. Blind)

Meet the Artists

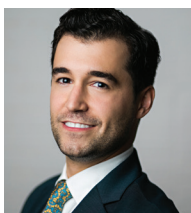


Robert Frazier

BASS-BARITONE | REVEREND JOHN HALE

WNO History: *The Marriage of Figaro* (Figaro), 2025–2026

Past: *The Marriage of Figaro* (Figaro); *Così fan tutte* (Don Alfonso, Guglielmo); *The Magic Flute* (Sarastro, Sprecher); *Cendrillon* (Pandolfe); *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Marquis de la Force); John Carroll's *Troubleshooting* (Rory); Leigha Amick's *Rhiannon's Condemnation* (Iorwert); *Salome* (Cappadocian), *American Apollo* (Jimmy O'Donnelly/Mr. Carhart)



Alexander McKissick

TENOR | REVEREND SAMUEL PARRIS

WNO History: *The Magic Flute* (First Armed Man), *Otello* (Roderigo), 2019–2020; *Silent Night* (Nikolaus Sprink), 2018–2019; *The Little Prince* (The Drunkard/Lamplighter/Baobab/Hunter), American Opera Initiative (Jimmy James in *A Bridge for Three*), *Candide* (Grand Inquisitor/Governor), 2017–2018; Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, 2017–2019

Past: *The Shining* (Grady/Derwent), Nashville Opera; *Antony and Cleopatra* (Eros, cover), *Ainadamor* (Bullfighter, cover), *Grounded* (Kill Chain), Metropolitan Opera; *Don Giovanni* (Don Ottavio), San Diego Opera, Opera Theater Connecticut; *American Apollo* (Nicola D'Inverno), Des Moines Metro Opera; *Roméo et Juliette* (Roméo), Wolf Trap Opera



Michelle Mariposa

MEZZO-SOPRANO | REBECCA NURSE

WNO History: *The Little Prince* (The Fox/A Rose), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Marcellina), 2025–2026; *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* (Teacher), American Opera Initiative (Poly 2 in *Mud Girl*), *Jungle Book* (Raksha), *Gods & Mortals*, 2024–2025

Past: *The Nose* (Ensemble, Countess, Podtochina cover), Chicago Opera Theater; winner, 2025 Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition, the Lynne Cooper Harvey Foundation Award in the Musicians Club of Women 2024 Vocal Competition, the Sullivan Award from the Sullivan Foundation



Atticus Rego

BASS | FRANCIS NURSE

WNO History: *The Little Prince* (The King/Baobab/Hunter), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Dr. Bartolo), 2025–2026

Past: *The Marriage of Figaro* (Dr. Bartolo), *Agrippina* (Claudio), *Sweeney Todd* (Judge Turpin, cover), *Carmen* (Zuniga, cover), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Dr. Bartolo, cover), performances with Chautauqua Opera Company



Joshua Dennis

TENOR | EZEKIEL CHEEVER

WNO History: *Grounded* (Kill Chain: Ground Control), 2023–2024

Past: *M. Butterfly* (Marc), Santa Fe Opera, world premiere; *The Fix* ("Shoeless" Joe Jackson), Minnesota Opera, world premiere; *La Villa Morte* (Léonard), Greek National Opera, Catapult Opera; *Rigoletto* (Duke of Mantua), Opera Colorado; Handel's *Messiah*, Pacific Symphony; *Stranger* (soloist), *The Thirteenth Child* (Prince Frederic), Santa Fe Opera; *Stinney: An American Execution* (Dean Clarkson), Opera Grand Rapids, world premiere; *Carmen* (Don José), Opera Idaho; *Don Giovanni* (Don Ottavio), Opera San Antonio

Meet the Artists



Nicholas Huff

TENOR | GILES COREY

WNO History: *The Little Prince* (The Drunkard/Lamplighter/Baobab/Hunter), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Don Basilio), *Aida* (Messenger), 2025–2026; *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* (Steve Wozniak), American Opera Initiative (Zach in *Cry, Wolf*), *Jungle Book* (Shere Khan), *Macbeth* (Malcolm), 2024–2025
Past: *Don Giovanni* (Don Ottavio), *The Turn of the Screw* (Peter Quint), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Mitch), Florida Grand Opera; *If I Were You* (Fabian Hart), Merola Opera; *The Magic Flute* (Tamino), Opera Fort Collins; *L'elisir d'amore* (Nemorino), Miami Lyric Opera



Kresley Figueroa

SOPRANO | MARY WARREN

WNO History: *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* (Chrisann Brennan), American Opera Initiative (River in *Mud Girl*), *Jungle Book* (Bagheera), *Macbeth* (Bloody Child), *Gods & Mortals*, 2024–2025; *Songbird* (Berginella), *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me* (Unicorn/Weaver), American Opera Initiative (Julia, *A Way Forward*), 2023–2024
Past: *Falstaff* (Nanetta), *Bel Canto* (Beatriz), Aspen Music Festival; *Don Giovanni* (Zerlina), Opera San Antonio; *West Side Story* (Francisca, cover for Maria), *Trouble in Tahiti* (Trio), The Glimmerglass Festival; *La Clemenza di Tito* (Servilia); *La Calisto* (Satirino); *L'elisir d'amore* (Adina); *The Magic Flute* (Papagena)



Tiffany Choe

SOPRANO | ANN PUTNAM

WNO History: *American Rhapsody*, American Opera Initiative (Poly 2 in *Mud Girl*), *Fidelio*, (Marzelline), *Gods & Mortals*, 2024–2025; *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet), *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me* (The Flamingo/Brother 2/Horse/Silk Merchant 1) 2023–2024
Past: *The Magic Flute* (Pamina), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Najad), *The Sound of Music* (Sister Margaretta), Arizona Opera; *The Magic Flute* (First Lady), Ravinia; *La bohème* (Mimi), *La rondine* (Magda), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Susanna), *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Constance), *West Side Story* (Rosalia), *L'étoile* (Laoula), Indiana University Opera Theater



Chandler Benn

BARITONE | THOMAS PUTNAM

WNO History: *The Little Prince* (The Pilot), *The Marriage of Figaro* (Antonio), 2025–2026
Past: *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (Joe Kavalier), world premiere co-production, Metropolitan Opera and Indiana University Jacobs School of Music; title roles, *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*; *The Merry Widow* (Danilo Danilovich)



Anneliese Klenetsky

SOPRANO | SARAH GOOD / RUTH PUTNAM

WNO History: *The Marriage of Figaro* (Countess Almaviva), 2025–2026; *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, (Chrisann Brennan), American Opera Initiative (Connie in *Tati*), *Macbeth* (Lady-in-Waiting), *Gods & Mortals*, 2024–2025
Past: *Alcina* (Alcina), Yale Opera; *Cold Mountain* (Ada), Music Academy of the West; *La traviata* (Violetta, cover), *Der Rosenkavalier* (Dressmaker, cover), Santa Fe Opera; *Turn of the Screw* (Governess); *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* (Clori); *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (La Bergère)

Meet the Artists



Veronica Siebert

MEZZO-SOPRANO | BETTY PARRIS

WNO History: *The Marriage of Figaro* (Cherubino), 2025–2026

Past: Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Mustardseed, Hermia cover), Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (Rosa Saks), Indiana University, world premiere; National Opera Association Carolyn Bailey Argento Fellowship; Ravinia Steans Institute Fellow; Gerdine Young Artist, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, where she received the Barbara and Stanley Richman Career Development Award



Alexandra Christoforakis

MEZZO-SOPRANO | SUSANNA WALCOTT

WNO History: *Turandot* (Ancella/Fantasma); *La bohème* (Lattivendola), 2014–2015, 2022–2023; American Opera Initiative (Angie in *Pepito*, Marianne in *75 Miles*, Arezoo Jazayeri in *The Investment*); *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Soeur Catherine, Mère Jeanne, cover); *Dead Man Walking* (Sister Lillianne)

Past: *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Une prêtresse), Washington Concert Opera; *The Marriage of Figaro* (Marcellina), Baltimore Concert Opera; Mozart Requiem (Cathedral Choral Society, The City Choir of Washington, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra); *Lord Nelson* Mass (Cathedral Choral Society); *Missa in tempore belli* (The City Choir of Washington)

Meet the Creative Team



Robert Spano

CONDUCTOR, WNO MUSIC DIRECTOR

WNO History: *The Marriage of Figaro*, 2025-2026; *Fidelio*, *Gods & Mortals*, 2024–2025, *Written in Stone*, 2021–2022

Past: Robert Spano, conductor, pianist, composer, and teacher, is known worldwide for the intensity of his artistry and distinctive communicative abilities, creating a sense of inclusion and warmth among musicians and audiences that is unique among American orchestras. He has been music director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra since 2022. As music director of the Aspen Music Festival and School since 2011, he oversees the programming of more than 300 events and educational programs for 630 students and young performers. After 20 seasons as music director with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, he now serves as music director laureate.



Francesca Zambello

DIRECTOR

WNO History: As artistic director of Washington National Opera since 2012, Francesca Zambello has directed more than 30 WNO operas; in the spring of 2016, she directed WNO's first-ever complete cycle of *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

Past: Artistic and General Director, Emerita of The Glimmerglass Festival in Central New York; she has directed at major opera houses and festivals all over the world.

Meet the Creative Team

Neil Patel

SET DESIGNER

WNO History: *Alcina*, 2017–2018

Past: Designs for theater, dance, and opera seen on Broadway (Tony Award-winning *Side Man*), the West End, Public Theater, American Repertory Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, The Gate (Dublin), Parco Theater (Tokyo), Edinburgh International Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and The Glimmerglass Festival, among many others

Mark McCullough

ORIGINAL LIGHTING DESIGNER

WNO History: The longtime WNO collaborator, who died in December 2025, designed lighting for more than 30 productions including *Porgy & Bess*, 2024–2025; *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me*, 2023–2024, 2013–2014; *Elektra*, 2022–2023; *Così fan tutte*, *Written in Stone*, 2021–2022; *Aida*, 2017–2018; and *The Marriage of Figaro*, 2016–2017. He also designed lighting for productions at the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Teatro Real in Madrid, Royal Opera House, Opera national du Rhin, Opera North, The Dallas Opera, Opera de Montreal, The Glimmerglass Festival, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, New York City Opera, and Seattle Opera.

Jason Lynch

LIGHTING DESIGNER

WNO History: *Treemonisha*, 2025–2026

Past: *Nat Turner in Jerusalem*, *Proof*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Cymbeline*, American Players Theatre; Chicago-area credits including Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company; regional credits including Baltimore Center Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Goodspeed Musicals, Guthrie Theater, The Old Globe; 2022 Equity Jeff Award (*Choir Boy*, Steppenwolf); 2019 Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award

Jessica Jahn

COSTUME DESIGNER

WNO History: *Blue*, *The Passion of Mary Caldwell Dawson*, 2022–2023; *Dead Man Walking*, 2016–2017

Past: *Rigoletto*, LA Opera, The Atlanta Opera; *Loving v. VA*, Virginia Opera; *Fidelio*, Canadian Opera Company, San Francisco Opera; *West Side Story*, Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Orfeo ed Euridice*, San Francisco Opera; *Castor and Patience*, Cincinnati Opera; *West Side Story*, Teatro Lirico di Cagliari; *The Magic Flute*, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; *La bohème*, Detroit Opera; *Blue*, Seattle Opera; *Snowy Day*, Houston Grand Opera, among numerous others

Mark Rivet

SOUND DESIGNER

WNO History: *Treemonisha*, 2025–2026; *American Rhapsody*, 2024–2025; *Songbird*, 2023–2024

Past: *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical* (touring); *Hamilton* National Tour, Angelica Company; *Les Misérables*, NETWORKS Touring

Eric Sean Fogel

ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHER

WNO History: *Porgy and Bess*, 2024–2025; *Songbird*, 2023–2024; *Samson and Delilah*, *Don Giovanni*, 2019–2020; *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me*, 2018–2019; *The Little Prince*, *Candide*, 2017–2018; *Florencia en el Amazonas*, 2014–2015; *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me*, *The Force of Destiny*, 2013–2014; *Show Boat*, 2012–2013

Past: Head of stage movement and choreography, The Glimmerglass Festival; guest stage director, Metropolitan Opera; director: *The Rake's Progress*, The Glimmerglass Festival; *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; *West Side Story*, Sydney Opera on the Harbour, Teatro Lirico di Cagliari; recent choreography credits: *Tannhäuser*, *The Sound of Music*, Houston Grand Opera; *Klangwolke*, Linz, Austria; *Florencia en el Amazonas*, Lyric Opera of Chicago

Meet the Creative Team

Andrea Beasom

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR & CHOREOGRAPHER

WNO History: *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me* (director), 2023–2024; *La traviata* (dancer), *Eugene Onegin* (dancer), 2018–2019; *Alcina* (dancer), *Candide* (soloist), 2017–2018; *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me* (assistant director), 2013–2014

Past: Opera and theater director, and choreographer whose work has been seen at the opera companies of Los Angeles, Seattle, Atlanta, Detroit, Kansas City, San Antonio, and Austin, and at The Glimmerglass Festival, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, Bard Summerscape, Berkshire Opera Festival, and National Sawdust; head of movement and choreography, Fourth Wall Ensemble; performances with the Royal Opera House of Muscat, Kennedy Center, Hawaii Opera Theatre, New York City Center, Los Angeles Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pasadena Playhouse, The Glimmerglass Festival, and The Dallas Opera

Production Team

Sean Corcoran[▲]

STAGE MANAGER

WNO History: More than 50 productions since 2006, including Marian Anderson Award recital, 2025–2026; *Jungle Book*, 2024–2025; *Il trovatore*, 2022–2023; *Don Giovanni*, 2019–2020; *The Little Prince*, 2017–2018; American Opera Initiative, 2018–2019, 2015–2016, 2014–2015, 2012–2013

Past: *Vanessa*, *Otello*, and Leonard Bernstein's *MASS*, National Symphony Orchestra; *Lakmé* and *Maometto II*, Washington Concert Opera; *Through Grief to Hope Festival*, IN Series; *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Madison Opera; *United in Song: Celebrating the Resilience of America*, Nouveau Productions/PBS; *Wolf Trap Opera*, 2006–2013

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Associate Concertmaster
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+ Begins alphabetical listing of musicians who participate in a system of revolving chairs within the string section

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^ On leave

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We take this opportunity to thank the many individuals who have made annual contributions of \$1,000 or more as of February 27, 2026. Space limitations do not enable us to list contributions less than \$1,000, but please know that gifts of all sizes have an impact, and we extend our most sincere gratitude to all of our supporters.

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