



MARRIAGE OF

Figaro

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
PRESENTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS OPERA

APRIL 8 + 10
HARRIS CONCERT HALL



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS

Rudi E. Scheidt
School of Music

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music

Kevin Sanders, Director

College of Communication and Fine Arts

Anne Hogan, Dean

Le nozze di Figaro

Act I: An Unused Room in the Count's Manor House

Act II: The Countess's Sitting Room

55 minutes

Intermission

20 minutes

Act III: A Grand Hall

Act IV: The Garden

Cast

Susanna

Desiree Soto

Countess Almaviva

Alyce Tarver Wells

Cherubino

Brianna Reilly

Marcellina

Shelbi Sellers

Barbarina

Clara Norell

Figaro

Carlos Romero

Count Almaviva

Sullivan Ojala-Helmbolt

Bartolo

Bradley Sowell

Basilio

T. J. Turner

Antonio

Camden Kegley

Production Team

Stage Director and Producer

Benjamin Wayne Smith

Music Director and Conductor

Dror Baitel

Lighting Designer

Jeremy Fisher

Costume Designer

Heather Duzan

Original Scenic Designer

Kaih Kayser

Scenic Consultant

Amy Healey

Technical Director

Erica Causi

Charge Artist

Natalie Ervolino

Coach and Rehearsal Pianist

Alex Benford

Stage Manager

Jasmine Simmers

Properties Master

Hattie Fann

About the Performers

Carlos Romero—Figaro

Mexican-American baritone Carlos Romero has been praised for his exceptional performance abilities in both the operatic and musical theater traditions. A recent graduate of Centenary College of Louisiana, Carlos has taken on various roles ranging from Schaunard in Puccini's *La Bohème*, Pirate King in Gilbert & Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance*, and Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. During his time at Centenary, Carlos was named the NATS Southern Region winner and was a recipient of Spotlight on Opera's full scholarship two years in a row.



Concert credits include: Elijah in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Judas in J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the Shreveport Symphony, and scenes from Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Carlos is currently at the University of Memphis Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music for his MM in vocal performance.

Desiree Soto—Susanna

Desiree Soto, soprano, is a doctoral candidate at the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music. Hailing from Texas, Desiree earned her Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from Texas Tech University. Some of her favorite roles include Pamina in *The Mini Magic Flute* (Opera Memphis), Lay Sister in *Suor Angelica* (Opera Memphis), Miles in *The Turn of the Screw* (Texas Tech Opera Theatre), Gretel in *Hansel und Gretel*, and Carrie in *Carousel* (Moonlight Musicals) and now, Susanna! Desiree has received awards from several competitions including Memphis's 2022 Beethoven Club's Savell Vocal Competition (First Place- Young Artists Division), University of Memphis's 2021 Concerto Competition (Winner) and the 2020 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (Encouragement Award-Regional.) Desiree would like to thank her family, friends and fiancé, Kieran, for their never-ending support.



Alyce Tarver Wells—Countess Almaviva

Alyce Tarver Wells is a soprano based in Memphis, where she is an instructor of musical theatre freshman and sophomores at the University of Memphis's Department of Theatre and Dance. Alyce is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance at the University of Memphis, with dissertation research focused on vibrato patterns.

Alyce's recent engagements include Galatea in Opera Memphis's production of Donizetti's *Il Pigmalione*. Other Opera Memphis credits include First Novice in *Suor Angelica* and chorus for *Pirates of Penzance*, *H. M. S. Pinafore*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Traviata*, and a company member for their improvisational Christmas special "A Victorian Holiday" at the Dixon Gallery and Gardens. She has also regularly performed for the annual 30 Days of Opera with Opera Memphis since 2018. Alyce's credits with the University of Memphis Opera productions include Donna Elvira in the productions of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Adele in Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus*, and Polly Peachum in Benjamin Britten's *Beggar's Opera*. Alyce was selected to perform as Laetitia in Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief* at the Curso Internacional de Música Vocal in Aveiro, Portugal in 2017. Alyce holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in Vocal Performance with a piano minor from Louisiana Tech University and a Master of Music in vocal pedagogy from the University of Memphis.



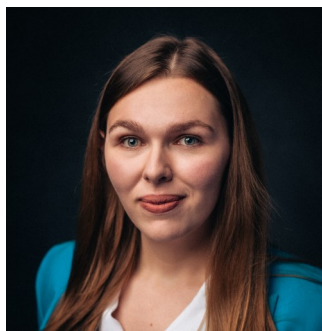
Sullivan Ojala-Helmbolt—Conte Almaviva

Sullivan Ojala-Helmbolt, baritone, lauded by the Minneapolis Star Tribune as "a strutting, silky toned and frighteningly entitled figure," in his performance of the villain Tarquinius in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, is an experienced interpreter of music of the 20th century and onward. He has had the pleasure of performing some of Benjamin Britten's other baritone roles including Sid in *Albert Herring* and Junius in *The Rape of Lucretia*. Sullivan also appeared as the medical student at the forefront of the student resistance to the Nazis, Hans Scholl, in a black box production of the underperformed two-person opera *Die Weisse Rose* by Udo Zimmermann. In addition to opera, Sullivan has worked in operetta and musical theater, including performances as Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus* by Strauss, Robin Oakapple in Gilbert & Sullivan's *Ruddigore*, and Russell Paxton/Ringleader in Kurt Weill's *Lady in the Dark*.



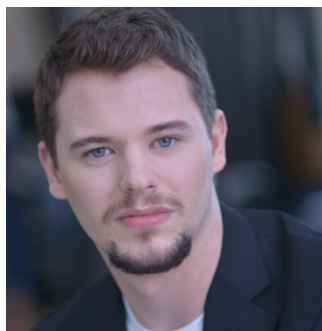
Brianna Reilly—Cherubino

Brianna Reilly is a mezzo-soprano based in Memphis, where she is pursuing both a Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degree in vocal performance at the University of Memphis. She has been selected as a finalist in competitions such as the Savell Voice Competition in Memphis, TN (3rd place), Music International Grand Prix U.S. Central Region (3rd place), and the National Association of Teachers of Singing Southeast Regionals (2nd place). This summer, Brianna will be a Principal Artist with Utah Vocal Arts Academy where she will be portraying the role of Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*). As an up-and-coming singer, Brianna's mission is to use her vibrant and energetic performances to instill her love of classical music into everyone that she can. She is a strong advocate of performing different types of works and has found much success in being a flexible and diverse singer.



Bradley Sowell—Bartolo

Bradley Sowell is a second-year doctoral student studying vocal performance at the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music at the University of Memphis. He is also a member of the voice faculty at Rhodes College, where he teaches applied lessons. He has performed in a number of operas including *Ruddigore*, *Don Giovanni*, *Zoom Speed Dating Tonight*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Le nozze di Figaro* as Sir Roderic, Masetto/Il Commendatore, Dater #12, Dr. Blind, and Bartolo respectively. He has also been a baritone soloist for Jennifer Higdon's *Ruminations* and Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Mr. Sowell received his Master of Music in vocal performance from the University of South Dakota and a Bachelor of Music Education in Choral Music Education from Georgia College.



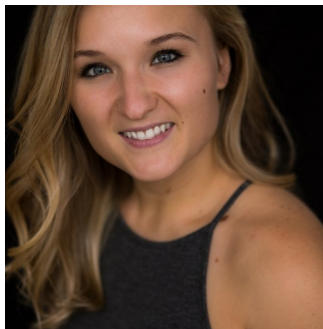
T. J. Turner—Basilio/Don Curzio

T. J. Turner made his Broadway debut as a guest artist in Kristin Chenoweth's *My Love Letter to Broadway* at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre in New York, NY. His notable musical theatre roles include Edna Turnblad in *Hairspray*, William Barfée in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Enoch Snow in *Carousel*, and the Baker in *Into the Woods*. Equally at home on the operatic stage, Mr. Turner was honored as a District Competitor in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition Tennessee District. Recent operatic engagements include the roles of Sam in *Susannah* and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*.



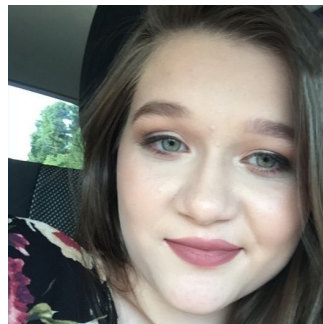
Shelbi Sellers—Marcellina

Shelbi Sellers is an actress, singer, dancer, and choreographer from Memphis. She holds a Bachelor of Music with a minor in theatre from the University of Memphis where she is currently pursuing her Master of Music under the teaching of Mary Wilson. She often performs as a guest artist with the U of M Southern Comfort Jazz Orchestra. On the stage, Shelbi has performed; *Ruddigore*, *Oklahoma!*(U of M), *Mamma Mia!* (Theatre Memphis), *Head Over Heels* (regional premiere at Circuit Playhouse), *Bye Bye Birdie* (DFT), and more. Having a background in both singing and dancing, Shelbi likes to incorporate the strengths of both as she teaches her dance students to sing and voice students to dance. She expresses her deepest gratitude to her family and Whitney Branan for the support that keeps her going! *Micah 6:8*



Clara Norell—Barbarina

Clara Norell is currently working towards a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance at the University of Memphis. Originally from Jackson, TN, she is excited for her final year of opera as an undergrad at the University of Memphis. With the University, she has played Denise from Offenbach's *Le Mariage aux Lanternes* and Zerlina from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. This past fall she played Zorah from Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore* with the U of M Opera. She also did Opera scenes as Cendrillon from Viadot's *Cendrillon* and Jeanette from Joseph Bologne's *L'Amant Anonyme*. Clara is so excited to be playing Barbarina in this production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. This character has been so much fun for her to bring to life!



Camden Kegley—Antonio, Co-Assistant Director

Camden Kegley, tenor, was born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska and is currently a junior voice performance major at the University of Memphis. He currently studies with Dr.Christopher Besch. Last semester he had the opportunity to perform the role of Despard in the University's production of *Ruddigore* and he is excited to play Antonio for this production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. When Camden is not singing, he enjoys rock climbing, playing board games, and studying Italian.



About the Directors

Stage Director, producer
Ben Smith

Ben has directed for Opera Memphis, Indianapolis Opera, Seattle Opera's Young Artist Program, Intermountain Opera Bozeman, Mobile Opera, Tacoma Opera, Asheville Lyric Opera, Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh, the Young Artist Program at Pittsburgh Opera, the University of Cincinnati/CCM, Baldwin Wallace University and The Opera Theater of Lucca, Italy.

In 2013 Ben was appointed Artistic Director of the Accademia Vocale Lorenzo Malfatti, a summer training program for young singers in Lucca, Italy.

Ben joined the faculty at Baldwin Wallace University in 2010 as their first full time Director of Opera. Since 2015, he has been the Opera Stage Director at the University of Memphis. He has taught master classes for singing actors across the U.S. and in China.

He began his career in opera as a singer, performing twenty-one leading roles in opera, operetta and musical theater. He has logged over 250 performances in the U.S. and Italy.

Music Director, conductor
Dror Baitel

Visiting Assistant Professor of Opera and Conducting Dror Baitel brings a wealth of knowledge and experience as a collaborative artist to his current position at the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music. Baitel was born in Israel and comes to the University of Memphis by way of New York City, where he spent years honing his craft working with various Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theater productions. Most recently, Mr. Baitel served as a music director and pianist for the opera scenes program and as a conductor for Gilbert's and Sullivan's *Ruddigore*. Baitel was on the original music team of Lin Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*, as well as a pianist-conductor for the hit musical *Dear Evan Hansen*. Additional credits include *Mary Poppins* (debut), *Matilda*, and *The King and I*. Baitel currently pursues his doctorate at the Juilliard School, where he is expected to graduate this coming spring.



Co-Assistant Director
Holly Thiemann

A Nashville native, Holly Thiemann is pursuing her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance with a minor in violin performance at the University of Memphis. She has performed the roles of Rose in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore* with the UofM and Celia in the Chicago Summer Opera's production of *Lucio Silla*. She is an active participant of the honors college, a student advisor to University music students, and the soprano section leader of the Chamber choir. Other accolades include winning first place in the Las and Sara Savell Fourth Biennial Vocal Competition, Presser Award, the Dean's Outstanding Achievement Award, 1st place in NATS, and earning the Ethel Maxwell Scholarship. She looks forward to continuing her education at the Masters level and having her first experience as Assistant Director in the spring 2022 production of *Le nozze di Figaro*.

A poster for the production 'Costi fan tutte'. The title is in large, colorful, blocky letters. Below the title are illustrations of two characters: a woman with blonde hair in a red dress and a man in a dark jacket. The background is a teal color with a white sunburst pattern. At the bottom, the date and time are listed, followed by the venue and website. Logos for Arts Memphis, Tennessee Commission, The Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation, and Hyde Family Foundation are at the bottom.

COSTI fan tutte

MAY 21 AT 7:30
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OPERAMEMPHIS.ORG

Arts Memphis
TENNESSEE COMMISSION
The Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation
HYDE FAMILY FOUNDATION

Illustration by Jan Gellert

University of Memphis Symphony Orchestra

VIOLIN I

Mitchell Cloutier
Franck Lakatos
Wesley Heinecke
Christopher DiVincenzo
Maria Sofia Alvarado
Keiber Utrera

VIOLIN II

Lindsay Keck
Elizabeth Betrous
Anne Rieh Reeman
Abigail Webber
Emily Cooley

VIOLA

Alejandro Gallagher
Matthew Finley
Clarence Golden
Svetlana Choumiatsky

CELLO

Bryan Edward Henderson
Roberta Dos Santos
Rong Cao

DOUBLE BASS

Garrett Kirk
Kedrick Cottrell

FLUTE

Chen-Yu Lee
Olivia A Remak

OBOE

Joshua T. Matthews
Victoria Louise Hoffman

CLARINET

Mark Allen, Jr.
James Allen Cutter III

BASSOON

Hannah Dickerson
Charles Jacob Bridges

HORN

Corey Johnson
Eric Sorensen

TRUMPET

Yiming Zhang
Brandon Tyler Helms

TIMPANI

Dwight Van De Vate

Assistants and Crew Members

Co-Assistant Stage Directors
Holly Thiemann and Camden Kegley

Assistant Costume Designer
Newman Jones

Master Electrician
Micki McCormick

Electricians
Kaylyn Nichols, Elliot Coppen

Assistant Technical Director
Paul Cartwright

Carpenters

Aaron Chang	Emily Roark
Zoe Perrock	Lelan Obom Jr.
Summer Gallagher	Amelia Scott

Assistant Stage Manger
Ethan Baskin

Special Thanks

Harvey Felder
Mary Wilson
Paulina Villareal
Randall Rushing
Christopher Besch
Kristen Russell
The School of Theatre and Dance
Opera Memphis
Brian Ruggaber
Jennifer Gillette
Theresa Winklemann

SCHEIDT FAMILY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER **TAKE YOUR SEAT**



If you love the performing arts get ready to sit up, sit back and sit proudly!

The curtain is about to rise on our beautiful new Scheidt Family Performing Arts Center on Central Avenue. Celebrate your love of music or surprise family and friends by naming a seat.

Name a seat today and become a permanent part of this new premier destination for the arts.

Learn more about this exciting opportunity!
memphis.edu/scheidtcenter