

*Northeastern Illinois University  
Department of Music  
presents*

# **Opera Workshop Scene Recital**

Directed by  
Sasha Gerritson

Accompanied by  
Dr. Kay Kim & Jane Kenas-Heller

*Performance running time: approximately 1 hour, 20 minutes*

## PROGRAM ORDER AND CAST LIST

Scene from  
**THE REMARKABLE ADVENTURE OF PRINCESS FU XIAO**  
by Ron Combs

Princess .....	Alyssa Polanco
Silly Monkeys .....	Laura Finnegan, Lety Ortega, Mimi Dean
Mother/Dragon .....	Andrea Tucci
Aunt Esther/Dragon .....	Gretchen Shierok
Gege, the Princess's half brother .....	Isaih Brown

Scene from  
**THE MAGIC FLUTE**  
by W.A. Mozart

First Lady .....	Dee Kimpel
Second Lady .....	Cortnei Davenport
Third Lady .....	Zanneta Kubajak
Tamino .....	Wellington Da Silva
Papageno .....	Brennan Roach
Queen of the Night .....	Kristine Falck-Petersen
Pamina .....	Beth Jargstorf
First Spirit .....	Liz Broeker
Second Spirit .....	Laura Finnegan
Third Spirit .....	Ashanti Roberts
Monastatos .....	Isaih Brown
Priest .....	Fred Sivils

Scene from  
**DER ROSENKAVALIER**  
by Richard Strauss

Landlord .....	Isaih Brown
Marschallin .....	Sasha Gerritson
Baron .....	Lorenzo Formosa
Octavian .....	Jeremy Cairns
Sophie .....	Gisella Milla
Kommissionar .....	Nicholas Brubaker

Scene from  
**LES MISERABLES**  
by Claude-Michel Schonberg

Eponine .....	Jilly Mayer
Foreman .....	Jeremy Cairns
Madame Thenardier .....	Sam Gallagher
Fantine .....	Gretel Mink Hansen
Cosette .....	Anne Glaza
Jean Valjean .....	Brennan Roach
Marius .....	Wellington Da Silva
Chorus .....	Erica Bland, Isaih Brown, Mimi Dean, Dee Kimpel, Ashanti Roberts, Andrea Tucci

## TECH/NEIU PERSONNEL

Director .....	Sasha Gerritson
Production Manager .....	Kay Lea Schuetz
Lighting Designer.....	Jordan Kardasz
Costume Designer .....	Bill Morey
Costume Assistant.....	Kate Setzer-Kamphausen
Accompanists .....	Jane Kenas-Heller, Kay Kim, Rick Hagedorn
Videographer .....	Anthony Schiavone
Poster Design.....	David Mitchell
House Manager.....	Steve Zivin
Poster/Flyer/Postcard Printing.....	The Printing Shop
Programs .....	Marcus Promotions
Security.....	Reginald Jones

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

**Erica Bland:** CHORUS—is an alumna of NEIU, excited to be back as a part of the *Les Misérables* ensemble. Other roles you might have seen her in include Musetta in Scenes from *La Bohème*, Pauline from *La Vie Parisienne*, or as Despina in scenes from *Così Fan Tutte*. *She wants to thank Sasha, NEIU, and her family & friends for always supporting her.*

**Isaih Brown:** GEGE, MONASTATOS, LANDLORD—A transfer student, Isaih comes to NEIU with an Associate’s Degree in Fine Arts with a specialized concentration in music. His main instrument is voice, but is also learning the piano and guitar. Isaih is truly honored and thankful to be a part of such a terrific and outstanding production. *Thank you to Professor & Director Sasha Gerritson.*

**Liz Broeker:** FIRST SPIRIT—is a Junior at NEIU majoring in Music Education. She also appeared in last spring’s *Jekyll & Hyde* and *Suor Angelica*. *Thanks always to Sasha!*

**Nicholas Brubaker:** KOMMISSIONAR—is currently pursuing a second master’s degree in Vocal Pedagogy at NEIU and studies voice with Dr. Heitzinger. While at NEIU, he has been seen as Henry Jekyll/Edward Hyde in *Jekyll & Hyde*, Gabriel Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*, Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls*, Guglielmo

in *Così Fan Tutte* and Gardefeu in *La Vie Parisienne*. Notable work includes roles in *The Gondoliers*, *The Merry Widow*, *Patience or Bunthorne’s Bride*, *Li’l Abner*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Ghosts of Versailles*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Magic Flute* and *Street Scene*. In addition to Operatic work, Mr. Brubaker is also an active recitalist and church musician.

**Jeremy Cairns:** OCTAVIAN, FOREMAN—is a graduate student at NEIU pursuing the M.A. in Applied Pedagogy, studying with Dr. Heitzinger. He is a singer, actor and arts administrator in Chicago. He is the Academic Operations Coordinator for the Music Conservatory at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, where he received his B.M. in Voice Performance. *Jeremy wishes to thank Sasha for her endless support, Gisella for her sense of humor, and Christopher for his love and patience.*

**Wellington Da Silva:** TAMINO, MARUIS—is a senior at NEIU majoring in Vocal Performance. He has appeared in numerous NEIU productions, including: *Into the Woods*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Secret Garden*, and *Guys and Dolls* and *Gianni Schicchi*. He also has the pleasure of serving as the tenor soloist with the Park Ridge Community Church Chancel Choir, under the direction of Sasha Gerritson.

**Cortnei Davenport:** SECOND LADY- is very happy to be returning to NEIU and Opera Workshop! Cortnei is an undergraduate Music Education major and she studies voice with Dr. Peterson.

**Mimi Dean:** SILLY MONKEY—is a student at NEIU working towards her English Degree. During the year she usually performs with the University Wind Ensemble and Orchestra, in the flute section, but is currently focusing on acting with Opera Workshop.

**Kristine Falk-Petersen:** QUEEN OF THE NIGHT—holds a bachelors in Fine Art from Columbia College, a Masters in Education here at NEIU, is a glad Golden Eagle, and has enjoyed appearances in many previous operas here at NEIU. *Kristine is so enamored by Opera, the ensemble, and of course, Sasha Gerritson, that she is bubbling with enthusiasm, gratitude, and is delighted to be included in this performance workshop!*

**Laura Finnegan:** SECOND SPIRIT, SILLY MONKEY—is a 1st year, 2nd Bachelors student at NEIU. This is the first time she will be performing on stage. *She is grateful to be in this program and have the opportunity to sing such lovely music.*

**Lorenzo Formosa:** BARON—No stranger to NEIU, guest baritone Lorenzo Formosa has distinguished himself as an artist who delights audiences in performances of opera, operetta, and symphony works. Making his critically acclaimed debut as Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Eugene Opera, The Register-Guard praised his performance saying, “Formosa has it all-voice, looks, intelligence and absolute command of the stage.” Some past engagements include the roles of Sweeney Todd in *Sweeney Todd* and Harry Easter in *Street Scene* at NEIU as a guest artist; Silvio in *I Pagliacci* at the Accorn Theater; Germont in *La Traviata* with L’Opera Piccola; Ping in Puccini’s *Turandot* with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra; *Carmina*

*Burana* with the Hawaii International Choral Festival and Honolulu Symphony Orchestra; Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with L’Opera Piccola. Other highlights include *Carmina Burana* with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra; Silvio in *I Pagliacci* with the Dayton Opera; Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* with the Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra and the Traverse Symphony Orchestra; Pops concerts with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra; and Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd* with Chicago’s Ravinia Festival where he also understudied the title role. As a concert soloist, Lorenzo’s repertoire features the *Requiems* of Brahms, Durufle and Mozart, Beethoven’s *Symphony No.9* and Mass in C, Bach’s *B Minor Mass*, Dvorak’s *Te Deum*, Haydn’s *Second Mass in C*, Handel’s *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabaeus*, and Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. In 1987 he was selected as a cantor in the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy with Pope John Paul II at Pontiac Silverdome, MI. In September 2001, the Aon Corporation called upon Lorenzo to sing their memorial service at the Cathedral of St. Patrick, New York, honoring their employee’s lost in the World Trade Center.

Lorenzo resides in Geneva, IL, a suburb of Chicago. In addition to stage and concert performances he is a soloist at Park Ridge Community Church, Park Ridge, IL, was a member of Chicago’s 2016 Olympic Bid Committee, and currently works in IT Security for USBank.

**Sam Gallagher:** MADAME THENARDIER—is a vocal performance major transferring as a junior from the College of Lake County in Grayslake. She has been in multiple choirs and theatre groups since high school, some highlights being Stevenson High School’s Madrigal Singers, OMNI Youth Services’ Reality Theatre, The CLC Singers at the College of Lake County, and she participated in the Waukegan Choral

Festival in both 2016 and 2017. This past May, she was given the opportunity to sing on a month long tour in China with a jazz band representing the College of Lake County. *Samantha is so excited to be performing in her first show at Northeastern Illinois and is looking forward to many more shows in the future.*

**Sasha Gerritson:** DIRECTOR/MARSCHALLIN—is a proud alum, having received both her Bachelor's and Master's Degree at NEIU. She also earned a Certificate in Vocal Performance from DePaul University. She has been serving as the Opera & Musical Theatre Director for NEIU for the past 10 years and before that taught Music Theory, Sight Singing and Ear training. She also is the recruitment/scholarship coordinator for the NEIU department of music. Additionally, Sasha serves on the Board of Trustees of DePaul University and is the current President of the Brookfield Zoo's Women's Board. In her spare time she does karate at the North Shore Dojo. Sasha lives in Glenview with her husband, Eugene Jarvis, and their two boys, Nate and Josh.

**Anne Glaza:** COSETTE—is a graduate student in vocal pedagogy at Northeastern Illinois University. She is a graduate of Dominican University in River Forest, where she studied voice with Rose Guccione. At Dominican, Anne performed onstage in *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Kitty) and *As You Like It* (Doo-wop muse). As a choral singer, Anne has sung with the Chicago Choral and the chorus of the Ravinia Music Festival. Anne studies voice with Dr. Robert Heitzinger, and is proud to join the NEIU community in her debut performance.

**Gretel Mink Hansen:** FANTINE—NEIU graduate student in Vocal Pedagogy, Gretel is a Florida Native, is a graduate of the University of Miami's Frost School of Music with a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance. Gretel has sung in various venues in Salzburg and Vienna, Austria,

has worked for The Walt Disney World Company, and has sung with the Orlando Opera Company in Orlando, Florida. Her NEIU credits include Rose Maurant in *Street Scene*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, The beggar woman in *Sweeney Todd*, and most recently Lucy in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Gretel has been a resident artist with Chamber Opera Chicago since 2009 and has toured the U.K. with that company for the past 6 years. *She wants to dedicate this performance to her precious baby, Henry.*

**Beth Jargstorf:** PAMINA—is an undergraduate here at Northeastern Illinois University. She is pursuing a double major in vocal performance and music education. Most recently, she has appeared as La Ciesca in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Annina in Strauss II's *A Night in Venice*. She also maintains a private studio and performs regularly throughout Chicago in the classical arena as well as with the Chicago Jazz Duo. This past summer, she was honored to sing in the Orvieto Musica Festival Art of Song program in Orvieto, Italy. Beth is the recipient of the Ruth Chakos Memorial Award in Music and was a finalist in the 2018 Elyse J. Mach Concerto Competition.

**Jane Kenas-Heller:** ACCOMPANIST, VOCAL COACH—is thrilled to continue her association with Opera Workshop, as she is Dr. Kay Kim's predecessor as staff pianist for the NEIU Music Department. As pianist for the modern dance company, Concert Dance, Inc., Jane has performed at the Ravinia Festival and at the New Dance Festival in Prague, Czech Republic. She is fortunate to have toured twice for the USO, performing on US military bases in Europe, Iceland, Greenland, and Canada. Also a singer, Jane was a finalist in the Bel Canto Competition, has sung with Chicago Opera Theatre, and toured with the Lyric Opera Center. As a composer, Jane's one-act opera, *Romance Novel*, was premiered at NEIU. Jane received her

Master of Arts in Vocal Pedagogy degree from NEIU as a student of Dr. Phyllis Hurt, and her Bachelor of Music Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point as a voice student of Dr. Ronald Combs.

**Kay Kim:** ACCOMPANIST/VOCAL COACH—an active collaborator, pianist Kay Kim performs an average of over 50 concerts a year both domestically and internationally. She has been one of the pianists of Chicago Symphony Orchestra's conductor's rehearsals, performed with the Stradivari Society artists and collaborated with Chicago Chamber Musicians. As a member of musical ambassador group Trio Chicago and Friends, Ms. Kim performs worldwide in Europe, Africa, Middle East, and Asia. She has been heard in CBS 'Early Show', WFMT 'Impromptu' and Dame Myra Hess Series. Ms. Kim serves as a full-time staff pianist and as an instructor of piano accompanying at NEIU. Her previous teaching and staff positions include Northwestern University, Indiana University and the Juilliard School. She holds a doctoral degree in piano performance from Northwestern University.

**Dee Kimpel:** FIRST LADY—an NEIU Alumna and current vocal performance major, has been in productions such as *Guys and Dolls*, *Così fan Tutti*, *La Vie Parisienne*, and many NEIU scene recitals. She has performed in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and various musicals and operetta's. Dee performed the role of Lois, in NEIU's emeritus Jim Blair production of *Lounging*, in the summers of 2015 and 2016 and as First Touriere in *Sour Angelica*. She also was an understudy for the role of Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*. *'I'm honored to be in any production of Sasha Gerritson's, because I know 'you just can't go wrong.' Glory to God! Thanks to my husband 'Bear', my daughters Zephra and Dana. "I am a Woman—Phenomenally" ~Maya Angelou*

**Zanneta Kubajak:** THIRD LADY—is a NEIU Senior majoring in Music Education and was most recently seen at NEIU in *Suor Angelica*. She has studied acting and improv at The Second City Training Center and has been seen in various productions in Chicago. Some of her favorite roles include Sister Moore in *The Amen Corner*, Andrea in *Once on This Island* and Poverty in *Wealth*. *Zanneta is thrilled to be a part of this wonderful production and to work with such an incredibly talented bunch!*

**Jilly Mayer:** EPONINE—is beyond thrilled to be returning to the NEIU stage this fall. She was previously seen at NEIU in *Sweeney Todd* (Mrs. Lovett) and *The Secret Garden* (Martha), among others. Having spent the past eight months donning black lipstick and a leather jacket as Nikki Black in *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*, Jillian is excited to get back to her musical theater roots in this bucket list role/show! Other recent favorites include *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Olive Ostrovsky), *Into the Woods* (Baker's Wife), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Narrator), and *Hairspray* (Tracey Turnblad). This upcoming October, Jillian will be beginning performances with *The Murder Mystery Company of Chicago*, and this November, she can be seen performing children's theater as Babe (the smart pig!) in Chicago Kids Company's production of *Three Little Pigs*. *Thank you to Sasha for always being so supportive and wonderful, and to Mike and Cayleigh for being very understanding about the constant singing in our home. Enjoy the show!*

**Gisella Milla:** SOPHIE—is a NEIU graduate student working towards her Master of Arts in Music at NEIU. In addition to the role of Suor Angelica in *Suor Angelica* last fall at NEIU, she has performed the main role of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz in *With Blood, With Ink* with Third Eye Ensemble and has participated in *Dido & Aeneas* and *La Calisto* productions with Roosevelt

University. Gisella has participated in the AIMS summer program at Granz, Austria in 2016 and in the Orvieto Musica at Orvieto in 2017. She has also performed as a soloist at the Annual Holiday Messiah Concert 2014/2015 season Hinsdale in several different recitals in Chicago area and her natal country Peru. *Gisella is very grateful to her family, the great team of work at NEIU and Sasha!*

**Fred Sivils:** PRIEST—appeared in his first musical production for Sasha Gerritson as a Community Listener in the April 2010 presentation of *La Bohème*. He is currently a Graduate-Student-At-Large at NEIU and has studied Voice with Kathy Cowan and Music Theory with Sasha. This is his 18th appearance in one of Sasha's productions. He is grateful for the chance to appear again with so many highly talented fellow singers and actors.

**Lety Ortega:** SILLY MONKEY—is currently pursuing two Bachelor's Degrees at Northeastern Illinois University. She is this year's President to NEIU's collegiate chapter of the National Association for Music Education. By day she teaches PreK–3rd grade Spanish and by night she participates in Northeastern's vocal ensembles. Previously, she portrayed the role of The General in NEIU's production of *Guys and Dolls*, she performed in Sasha Gerritson's adaptation of *Così Fan Tutte* as a member of the chorus and she played Amy in the Fall of 2013 musical scene recital of *Little Women*. *Lety would like to thank her voice professor Dr. Katherine Peterson, her choir director and academic advisor, Dr. Owen, and her Opera Workshop professor and angel, Sasha Gerritson. Those three people have been truly instrumental in her growth as a musician. Thanks to them, she expects to graduate in the spring of 2020 with degrees in Music Education and in Spanish. Lastly, she would like to thank her friends and family for supporting her.*

**Alyssa Polanco:** PRINCESS—transferred in from Wright College as junior with an associate's degree. This is her first time being a part of an opera workshop class, and is currently going for a bachelors in music BM (vocal performance) and a minor in theatre.

**Brennan Roach:** PAPAGENO, VALJEAN—is a graduate of NEIU, having earned his Masters in Vocal Pedagogy, studying under Dr. Bob Heitzinger. While at NEIU he appeared in many leading roles in productions including: *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Street Scene*. He has spent time performing and directing regionally around Chicago as well as in the Greater Boston Area with such theatres as Kokandy Productions, Fox Valley Repertory, The Artistic Home, Light Opera Works, Irish Theatre Chicago, Jedlicka Performing Arts Center, Terra Mysterium and Reagle Music Theatre of Greater Boston.

**Ashanti Roberts:** THIRD SPIRIT—is a senior in the Vocal K-12 Music Education Program and a part-time employee here at Northeastern Illinois University. This is her first performance under Sasha's direction. Previously, she sang in the NEIU University Chorus for several semesters. She is thrilled to be a member of Opera Scenes this semester.

**Gretchen Sheirok:** AUNT ESTHER—an NEIU music student, is thrilled to be in another show at NEIU. This makes her 26<sup>th</sup> appearance singing and being the prop mistress. She also enjoys singing in local choir groups around the city and suburbs.

**Andrea Tucci:** MOTHER—is a grad student at NEIU studying with Dr. Peterson. Previous roles include Gertrud in *Hansel and Gretel*, Florinda in *Into the Woods*, and Madame Pompous in *Too Many Sopranos*. *She hopes you enjoy the show!*

## ABOUT THE OPERA/MUSICAL THEATRE PROGRAM AT NEIU

In order to give our students a variety of experiences, as they go forward with their performing and teaching careers, an intentional four year repertoire rotation was established in 2007. In between major productions we supplement the student learning experience with scene recitals drawn from all types of repertoire.

**YEAR ONE:** Modern opera

**YEAR TWO:** Modern musical theater

**YEAR THREE:** Standard repertoire

**YEAR FOUR:** Music theater

2007–2008 (Year one)

***Susannah*** by Carlisle Floyd  
***The Medium*** by Gian Carlo Menotti

2008–2009 (Year two)

***Into the Woods*** by Stephen Sondheim

2009–2010 (Year three)

***La Bohème*** by Giacomo Puccini  
(sung in Italian)

2010–2011 (Year four)

***The Secret Garden*** by Lucy Simon

2011–2012 (Year one)

***A Christmas Carol*** by Ronald Combs  
***Street Scene*** by Kurt Weill

2012–2013 (Year two)

***Sweeney Todd*** by Stephen Sondheim

2013–2014 (Year three)

***La Vie Parisienne*** by Jacques Offenbach  
***Così fan tutte*** (in Italian) by Mozart

2014–2015 (Year four)

***Guys and Dolls*** by Frank Loesser

2015–2016 (Year one)

***The Worst One Ever*** by Gary D. Belshaw  
***Die Fledermaus*** (in English) by J Strauss

2016–2017 (Year two)

***Jekyll & Hyde*** by Frank Wildhorn & Leslie Bricusse

2017–2018 (Year three)

***Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi***  
By Giacomo Puccini

2018–2019 (Year Four)

***The Grand Hotel***  
By Robert Wright and George Forrest