

# Minnesota OPERA

## *Silent Night* Artist Biographies



### **Joseph Beutel (the British Major)**

Joseph Beutel, bass, joins Minnesota Opera's Resident Artist program after spending the summer as a Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Artist, where he covered Méphistophélès in *Faust* and the Catholic Priest in *The Last Savage*. Previous roles have included the Impresario/Direttore in the young artist production of *Viva La Mamma!* at Seattle Opera, Benoit and Alcindoro in *La bohème* for South Texas Lyric Opera; Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Mustafà in *L'italiana in Algeri*, Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*, Le Roi in *Cendrillon* and Herr Reich in *Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor* for IU Opera Theatre; and the Sergeant in *Pirates of Penzance* Western Michigan University.

Mr. Beutel is a district finalist of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2011 and a Palm Beach Opera Competition Encouragement Award recipient in 2010 and 2011. For Minnesota Opera this season, he will appear as the British Major in *Silent Night*, Le Bailli in *Werther*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the Bonze in *Madame Butterfly*.



### **Liam Bonner (Audebert)**

Praised by *Opera News* for his "rich, versatile voice" and "beautiful instrument," rising baritone Liam Bonner will sing the role of Lieutenant Audebert in the world premiere of *Silent Night* at Minnesota Opera in the 2011-2012 season. He will also debut at Los Angeles Opera as Sid in *Albert Herring* under James Conlon and at Palm Beach Opera in their Golden Jubilee: 50th Anniversary Concert singing excerpts from *Die Fledermaus*, *Pagliacci*, *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Pasquale*. Mr. Bonner will also return to the Opera Theatre of St. Louis as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. Future seasons will see Mr. Bonner at Houston Grand Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia and Washington National Opera.

Last season, Mr. Bonner sang his first performances of Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande* with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in a new production by David Alden, a role which he also covered at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as the role of Raimbaud in the new production of *Le Comte Ory*. He also sang his first performances of Zurga in *Les pêcheurs de perles* with New Orleans Opera, Ned Keene in *Peter Grimes* in a return to Houston Grand Opera, Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Ash Lawn Opera Festival and Valentin in *Faust* with North Carolina Opera.

In recent seasons, he made his Washington National Opera debut as the title role in *Hamlet* to great acclaim, returned to Houston Grand Opera for Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore* and made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Moralès in *Carmen*. Mr. Bonner was also seen at the Metropolitan Opera as Horatio in *Hamlet* in the worldwide HD broadcast. He sang his first performances of Malatesta in *Don*

*Pasquale* with Opera New Jersey and *Der Geliebte von Gestern* in Weill's *Royal Palace* at the Bard Music Festival. He also made his Carnegie Hall debut singing Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* as an alumnus guest artist with the Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic.

Mr. Bonner made his European operatic debut as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* at English National Opera. He maintains a strong relationship with Houston Grand Opera, where he has sung numerous roles that include Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Redburn in *Billy Budd*, the baritone soloist in Theofanidis's *The Refuge* (a recording of which is available commercially on the Albany Records label), Harašta in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, the Witch in Basil Twist's production of *Hänsel und Gretel*, and both Moralès and El Dancaïro in *Carmen*. He joined Wolf Trap Opera for *Il Cavaliere di Befiore* in Verdi's *Un giorno di Regno* and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Berkshire Opera for the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Aspen Opera Theatre for Sid in *Albert Herring* and L'Opéra de Québec for its annual opera gala concert.

The baritone has appeared with the Houston Ballet as soloist in Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and in Orff's *Carmina Burana* at his alma mater, Carnegie Mellon University. He has also joined the Pittsburgh Symphony for highlights from Mozart's operas and the Filharmonie Hradec Králové in the Czech Republic for a concert of opera favorites.

He earned his Master of Music from Manhattan School of Music where he sang his first performances of the title role of *Don Giovanni* as well as Belaev in Hoiby's *A Month in the Country* (also on the Albany Records label). He also holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Carnegie Mellon University in his home city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Additionally, Mr. Bonner is a former member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, as well as San Francisco Opera's Merola Program and Studio and Apprentice Artist at Central City Opera. He is the recipient of the Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshanna Foundation, a first-prize winner of the Gerda Lissner Foundation Competition, a national semi-finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and an award winner from the George London Foundation and Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition.



## **William Burden (Nikolaus)**

American tenor William Burden has won an outstanding reputation in a wide-ranging repertoire throughout Europe and North America.

He has appeared in many prestigious opera houses in the United States and Europe, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, New York City Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Opéra National de Paris, Glyndebourne Opera Festival, Théâtre du Châtelet, Bayerische Staatsoper, Berliner Staatsoper, Madrid's Teatro Real and the Saito Kinen Festival. His many roles include the title roles of *Faust*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Béatrice and Bénédicte*, *Candide* and *Acis and Galatea*; Captain Vere in *Billy Budd*, Don José in *Carmen*, Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore*, Pylade in *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Narraboth in *Salome*, Gérald in *Lakmé*, Nerone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* and Aschenbach in *Death in Venice*. He also created the role of Gilbert Griffiths in Picker's *An American Tragedy* at the Metropolitan Opera, and the role of Dodge in Daron Hagen's *Amelia* at the Seattle Opera.

In concert, Mr. Burden has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and with Les Arts Florissants at the Théâtre des Champs-

Elysées, Barcelona and Lyon. He recently made his Edinburgh Festival debut as the title role in *Judas Maccabeus*, conducted by William Christie.

Mr. Burden's recordings include Barber's *Vanessa* (Anatol) with the BBC Symphony Orchestra on the Chandos label and *Musique adorable: The Songs of Emmanuel Chabrier* for the Hyperion label.

This season Mr. Burden makes his debuts at the Los Angeles Opera as Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw* and the New Orleans Opera as Nadir in *Les pêcheurs de perles*. He also returns to the Seattle Opera for Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and to the Opera Company of Philadelphia for the American premiere of Henze's *Phaedra*.

Raised in Florida, Mr. Burden received his master's degree in vocal performance at Indiana University. He was also a member of the Merola Program in San Francisco and at the Apprentice Artists Program at the Santa Fe Opera.



## Michael Christie (conductor)

Michael Christie became the Virginia G. Piper Music Director of the Phoenix Symphony in August 2005 and music director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic in September 2005. With his orchestras, he has embarked on a series of ambitious projects focusing on interdisciplinary collaborations with visual artists, dance companies and theater groups, as well as on contemporary composers such as Gorecki, Ligeti, Adams, Gojov and Tan Dun. He is also Music Director of the Colorado Music Festival, where he has been much praised for his innovative programming and where festival audiences are now at an all time high.

Christie made his New York Philharmonic debut in March 2007, stepping in for an ailing Riccardo Muti. In previous seasons, he has conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Dallas Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Houston Symphony, The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, Oregon Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony and the Cincinnati Symphony, among many others. In the 2008–2009 season, Christie returned to the St. Louis Symphony and made his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra. In the 2009–2010 season, he made his debut conducting *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Wexford Festival. This production, a collaborative effort with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and directed by James Robinson, won the 2010 Irish Times Irish Theatre Award for Best Opera. He conducted the opera again at the Aspen Music Festival in August 2010. In 2011, he makes his debut with the Minnesota Opera and returns to the Opera Theatre of St. Louis.

In Europe his career has been equally successful, with past engagements including the DSO Berlin, Orchestre National de Lille, Swedish Radio Symphony, the Netherlands Radio Symphony, the City of Birmingham Symphony, the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, the NDR Hannover Orchestra and the Czech Philharmonic. His ties to orchestras in Scandinavia have been particularly strong with engagements in all five countries.

Christie enjoys a strong profile in Australia, where aside from his role as chief conductor of the Queensland Orchestra (which ended in December 2004), he has also conducted the Sydney Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony, Opera Queensland and the Western Australian Symphony in Perth.

Michael Christie has also established an excellent reputation as an opera conductor and he has regularly conducted both operas and ballet performances at the Opernhaus, Zurich. He has a very special relationship with the house in Zurich where, in the 1997–1998

season, he was assistant conductor to Franz Welser-Möst (a position especially created for him). That season he made his highly successful debut conducting performances of *Roméo et Juliette* and a new production of *Hansel and Gretel*. He has also worked with the Finnish National Opera, where he conducted *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1999–2000, and with the Queensland Opera where he made his debut conducting *Così fan tutte* the same season. In March 2004, he made his highly successful opera debut in The Netherlands conducting John Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer* with the Rotterdam Philharmonic. In June 2009, Christie made his United States debut conducting staged opera with a new production of John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* at the Opera Theater of St. Louis.

Michael Christie first came to international attention in 1995 when he was awarded a special prize for "Outstanding Potential" at the First International Sibelius Conductor's Competition in Helsinki. Following the competition, Mr. Christie was invited to become an apprentice conductor with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and subsequently worked with Daniel Barenboim, both in Chicago and at the Berlin State Opera during the 1996–1997 season.

Michael Christie graduated from the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music with a bachelor's degree in trumpet performance.



## Troy Cook (Father Palmer)

American baritone Troy Cook recently debuted both the Hamburgische Staatsoper as Marcello in *La bohème*, where he also performed his first Ford in *Falstaff* in the spring of 2010, and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*.

Troy Cook's 2011–2012 season includes appearances with Minnesota Opera, as Father Palmer in the world premiere of *Silent Night*; the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, as Marcello in *La bohème*; Opera Company of Philadelphia, as Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*; the Winston-Salem Symphony, for performances of *Carmina Burana*; and Central City Opera, as Marcello. Additionally, he joins Opera Rara for a recording of Donizetti's *Caterina Cornaro*.

In the 2010–2011 season, Mr. Cook returned to Lyric Opera of Kansas City as the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*, sang his first Escamillo in *Carmen* at Green Mountain Opera Festival and appeared on the concert stage in performances of the Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Pacific Symphony and the Arizona Musicfest, the *St. John Passion* with the Portland Symphony Orchestra and Handel's *Messiah* with the Winston-Salem Symphony.

Future seasons will find him in multiple leading roles with Opera Company of Philadelphia.

He returned to Opera Company of Philadelphia as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* to open the 2009–2010 season, appeared in Bilbao for Poulenc's *Les mamelles de Tirésias* and was recently seen in Santander and Bilbao for *Il viaggio a Rheims*. He also performed concerts with the Portland Symphony and the Arizona Musicfest and was Albert in Kentucky Opera's *Werther*. The 2009–2010 season also included Marcello in Florida Grand Opera's new production of *La bohème* and just prior he was Enrico in Las Palmas' *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Troy Cook opened 2007–2008 as Zurga with Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Just prior, he sang in a gala concert with Opera Pacific, as Marcello in *La bohème* with Berkshire Opera and performed Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Opera Omaha. The year 2007 began with his German debut with the Semperoper Dresden as Marcello, and he also performed Marcello in his Opera Company of Philadelphia debut to open their season. In addition, he returned to the American Ballet Theater in New York and Washington D.C. for the *Kindertotenlieder*.

In 2006 he was Sharpless for Berkshire Opera and debuted with La Monnaie, Brussels in a gala concert of *I pagliacci*. In spring 2006, he performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in a world premiere conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen; bowed as Enrico in Kansas City's *Lucia di Lammermoor*; appeared as a soloist in *Carmina burana* with the San Antonio Symphony and performed Zurga with Opera Carolina. He also sang in a Richard Tucker Foundation concert in New York City. In 2004–2005, he returned to San Francisco Opera as Mr. Flint in *Billy Budd*. Reviews of his Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* the previous season at San Francisco Opera included: "Baritone Troy Cook is spectacular in the role of Figaro. He's insolent, charming, self-amused, a rogue ... his patter and roudades are precise and ring out fearlessly."

Other recent appearances include Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Fort Worth Opera, Guglielmo with Santa Fe Opera and Toledo Opera, solo recitals under the auspices of the Marilyn Horne Foundation and *Carmina burana* with the American Ballet Theater at Lincoln Center. Mr. Cook also appeared with the Metropolitan Opera in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* and in a new production of *Sly* in 2001. In the fall of 2000, he made his European debut as Giacomo in *Beatrice Cenci* with the Grand Théâtre de Genève followed by Schaunard in *La bohème* and Morales in *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera. Other engagements included productions of *Barbiere* with Florida Grand Opera and Minnesota Opera.

Troy Cook made his New York City Opera debut in the 1999–2000 season with roles in the trilogy, *Central Park*, which he also sang with Glimmerglass Opera. Those performances were taped and later telecast on the PBS series Great Performances. He was a member of the Apprentice Artist Program of the Santa Fe Opera, the Florida Grand Opera Studio and holds a Master of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music. He has studied voice with Bill Schuman.



## Marcus Dilliard (lighting designer)

Marcus Dilliard has designed for opera, theater and dance across North America and in Europe, including numerous productions for Minnesota Opera, the Guthrie Theater, Children's Theater Company, Minnesota Dance Theater and Theatre de la Jeune Lune. Recent designs include *God of Carnage* for the Guthrie Theater, *Norma* for Lyric Opera Kansas City, *Song of Extinction* for Theater Latte Da, *All Is Calm* at the Pantages Theater and *An Ideal Husband* for Great Lakes Theater Festival. Upcoming projects include *Così fan tutte* for Lyric Opera Kansas City, *Charlie's Aunt* for the Guthrie Theater, *Cinderella* for the Ordway Music Theater and *Julius by Design* for Penumbra Theater.



## A. J. Glueckert (Kronprinz)

Tenor A. J. Glueckert begins his first season as a Minnesota Opera Resident Artist singing the title role of *Werther* in the second cast, Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the Kronprinz in *Silent Night*. Previously, he has been seen as Dr. Caius in *Falstaff* at Utah Opera where he was a resident artist last year and the Simpleton in *Boris Godunov* at Utah Festival Opera. Other roles include the Tambor-Major in *Wozzeck* and Sextus in Harrison's *Young Caesar* for Ensemble Parallèle, Wolfram in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* for Santa Fe Opera, where he was an Apprentice Artist the last two seasons, Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette* and Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for San Francisco Lyric Opera, El Remendado in *Carmen* for Festival Opera of Walnut Creek and Carl Magnus in *A Little Night Music* for SFCM Musical Theater Ensemble.

Mr. Glueckert performed a number of roles at his alma mater, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where he studied with Cuban

tenor Cesar Ulloa, including Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Dema in Cavalli's *L'Ecisto*, the title role in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* and Don Basilio/Don Curzio in *Le nozze di Figaro*. He is a first place winner of the Y.E.S. Stewart Brady Competition, and received an encouragement award in 2010 and won the district competition in 2011 from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, where he would go on to receive an encouragement award at the regional level.



## Andrzej Goulding (video/projection designer)

Andrzej Goulding trained in set and costume design on the theatre design course at Central Saint Martins in London.

**Video designs include:** *Orlando* (Glasgow Opera House, Festival Theatre Edinburgh), *Enlightenment* (Hampstead Theatre), *Fried Rice Paradise* (Esplanade Theatre, Singapore), *Ghost the Musical* (Workshop), *The Last Witch* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh), *The Pros, The Cons and a Screw* (Derby Theatre), *The Snow Queen* (Derby Theatre), *Pinnocchio* (Royal and Derngate), *101 Dalmations* (Royal and Derngate), *Speed the Plow* (Old Vic Theatre), *Humble Boy* (Royal and Derngate), *Street Scene* (Young Vic, Tour), *Varjak Paw* (Linbury Studio, Tour), *The Wizard of Oz* (Royal and Derngate), *The Real Thing* (Salisbury Playhouse) and *Feather Boy* (National Theatre Studio).

**Animation work:** *Ghost the Musical* (Manchester Opera House, Piccadilly Theatre), *Love Never Dies* (Adelphi Theatre), *The Wizard of Oz* (London Palladium) and *Alice in Wonderland* (Royal Opera House London).

**Assistant/associate set design:** *Ghost the Musical* (2011), *Matilda the Musical* (RSC, Courtyard Theatre), *The Lord of the Rings* (Princess of Wales Theatre, Toronto), *The Lord of the Rings* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane, London), *Boeing Boeing* (Comedy Theatre), *The Prisoner of Second Avenue* (Vaudeville Theatre), *The Reporter* (National Theatre), *Buried Child* (National Theatre), *Hedda Gabler* (Almeida Theatre), *French and Saunders* Tour 2008, *The Vortex* (Manchester Royal Exchange), *Into the Woods* (Royal Opera House), *Hedda Gabler* (Gate Theatre), *Under a Blue Sky* (Duke of York), *Dorian Gray* (Sadlers Wells, Tour), *Her Naked Skin* (National Theatre), *Norman Conquests* (Old Vic), *Carmen* (Metropolitan), *Complicit* (Old Vic), *Little Voice* (Vaudeville Theatre).

**Production Designer:** *Applause* (Cannes 2008)



## Craig Irvin (Lieutenant Horstmayer)

Bass-baritone Craig Irvin brings a vibrant sound and commitment to character to each role he portrays. Recently in residence with Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, his assignments included Zuniga in *Carmen*, Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Sam in *A Masked Ball* and Ashby in *La fanciulla del West*. Additionally, he will cover the roles of Bottom, the title role in *The Mikado*, the title role in *Hercules* and Escamillo (a role which he sings in the student matinee performance).

This summer, and the 2011–2012 season, Craig will make role and company debut with Wolf Trap Opera as the Villains in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, with Minnesota Opera and Opera Company of Philadelphia in the premiere of Kevin Puts' new opera *Silent Night* and with Cleveland Orchestra in *Salome*. Additional upcoming engagements include Nashville Opera in his reprisal of the role of

Ashby in *La fanciulla del West* as well as joining the roster of Los Angeles Opera covering the role of Paolo in *Simon Boccanegra*.

Craig recently sang the Imperial Commissioner in *Madama Butterfly* and the Doctor/Professor in *Lulu* with the company as well as Ramphis in *Aida* with Pensacola Opera. In the 2009–2010 season, he returned for a second year with Lyric Opera of Chicago where his assignments included Angelotti in *Tosca* as well as covering the roles of Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Brander in Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*. Additionally he was seen with the Knoxville Opera as Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and as a soloist in Verdi's *Requiem* with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra.

Other recent engagements include an appearance with Intermountain opera as Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Naples Opera as Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* and with Des Moines Metro Opera as Bottom in their production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A winner of the Heinz Rehfuss Singing Actor Award sponsored by Orlando Opera, Mr. Irvin spent a season with the company as a Resident Artist, and then stayed on with the company a second year as a mainstage artist. During his tenure there he was seen featured as the Pirate King in *Pirates of Penzance*, Abimelech in *Samson et Dalilah*, Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Elder Ott in *Susannah* and Angelotti in *Tosca*. While in Orlando, Mr. Irvin also sang the role of Gaston in over 700 performance of *Beauty and the Beast* at Walt Disney World, MGM.

Other role highlights include Private Willis in *Iolanthe* with Nashville Opera and Don Alhambra in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers* with Opera North. In the course of his graduate work at The University of Tennessee he has been seen with Knoxville Opera Company as Pooh Bah in *The Mikado*, Der Sprecher in *Die Zauberflöte* and Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, as well as Reverend Blitch in *Susannah* and the title role in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* with the Knoxville Opera Studio. A native of Iowa, Mr. Irvin did his undergraduate study at the Simpson College in Indianola under the tutelage of Dr. Robert Larsen.



## **Kärin Kopischke (costume designer)**

Kärin Kopischke's costume designs for opera have been seen across the country, including Minnesota Opera, Pittsburgh Opera and Utah Opera. Kärin has also designed costumes for Regional Theatre Tony Award-winners American Conservatory Theater, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, Long Wharf, Victory Gardens, Children's Theatre Company, Crossroads, Cincinnati Playhouse and Chicago Shakespeare. She is a recipient of the Joseph Jefferson Award, the AriZoni Award and was nominated for the Prague Quadrennial. Ms. Kopischke has worked with award-winning directors John Rando, Anna Shapiro, Douglas Hughes, Anna Deavere Smith, Eric Simonson and Joe Chaikin, and has taught costume design at Northwestern, DePaul and Carroll universities. She lives in the woods of Door County, Wisconsin with her family Alan, Anya and Simon, and is currently designing costumes for a feature film being shot there.



## **John Robert Lindsey (Jonathan Dale)**

Colorado native tenor John Robert Lindsey is a recent graduate of the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he earned his MM in vocal performance under the tutelage of Julie Simson. Past engagements include the Tenor Soloist in the *Messiah* by Handel, Sam Polk in *Susannah* by Floyd, the character of Stage Manager in *Our Town* by Rorem and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* by Mozart. Mr. Lindsey was met with numerous successes in competitions in the recent past. He was a regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions for the past two years, as well as taking third place in 2010 and first place in 2011 at the prestigious Denver Lyric Opera Guild competition.

For Minnesota Opera's 2011-2012 season, Mr. Lindsey will appear as Jonathan Dale in *Silent Night*, Schmidt in *Werther*, Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Goro in *Madame Butterfly*.



## **Angela Mortellaro (Madeleine)**

Soprano Angela Mortellaro returns to the Minnesota Opera's Resident Artist program for a second season, singing the roles of Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Madeleine in *Silent Night*, Sophie in *Werther*, the title role in the second cast of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Kate Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*. Last season, she was seen as Amore in *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Clorinda in *Cinderella* and Annina in *La traviata*. Ms. Mortellaro has sung the role of Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* with both PORTOpera and Sarasota Opera. She was a Caramoor Opera Bel Canto Young Artist and a Chautauqua Opera Apprentice Artist, where she sang Edith in *The Pirates of Penzance* and Anna Gomez in *The Consul*. For Orlando Opera Company, she sang Sister Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica*, Sally in *Die Fledermaus* and Clorinda in *La Cenerentola*. The soprano also appeared as Clorinda for Aspen Opera Theatre as well as Frasquita in its production of *Carmen*. Internationally, she has performed Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* for Operafestival di Roma.

Ms. Mortellaro has a master of music degree in vocal performance from Rice University (Houston, Texas), where she sang Diana in *La Calisto*, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Sandrina in *La finta giardiniera* and the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*. She completed her bachelor of music degree at the University of Wisconsin (Whitewater).



## **Michael Nyby (William Dale)**

A native of Hamilton, Ontario, Michael Nyby holds a bachelor's degree in voice performance from Ithaca College, where he was a student of Randie Blooding, and a Master's in Opera from the University of British Columbia, where he studied with Peter Barcza. He made his operatic debut in 2002 with the Ithaca Opera Company, and his Canadian professional debut in 2007 with the Burnaby Lyric Opera. He has performed with the Vancouver Opera, the Vancouver Bach Choir, the Santa Fe Opera, Minnesota Opera and the Duluth Festival Opera. Michael was a member of the 2007-2008 Vancouver Opera in Schools touring ensemble with whom he sang 138 performances of Figaro in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. He has participated in artist development programs such as the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice program, the Minnesota Opera Resident Artist Program and the Vancouver Opera Young Artist Coaching Intensive. He sang the role of Lord Cecil in *Maria Stuarda* for Minnesota Opera's main stage season during the 2010-2011 season and was recently singled out in the *New York Times* for his 'standout performance as the shepherd Leuthold' in Caramoor's *Guillaume Tell* by Rossini. The Toronto resident looks forward to *Fiorello* in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Vancouver Opera's 2011-1012 season, where he will also be featured in *Romeo et Juliette*.



## **Francis O'Connor (set designer)**

Opera: Der fliegende Holländer (Bern, Switzerland); Maria di Rohan (Buxton Festival Opera); Il turco in Italia (Garsington Opera); Benzin (Chemnitz, Germany); Wut (Bern, Switzerland); Luisa Miller, Lucrezia Borgia, Roberto Devereux (Buxton Festival Opera); Manon, The Adventures of Pinocchio (Opera North, Oper Chemnitz and Minnesota Opera – nominated for a Faust Award for his design); Capriccio, La Fanciulla del West, The Magic Flute, Don Giovanni, South Pacific and Iolanthe (Grange Park Opera); A Midsummer Night's Dream, Mirandolina, Ariadne, Don Pasquale (Garsington Opera); La traviata (English National Opera); Der Vogelhändler (Komische, Berlin); Maometto II (Strasbourg); Don Pasquale (Geneva).

Theater: No Naughty Bits, and Loyalty (Hampstead Theatre); Macbeth (Liverpool); Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (Dublin); The Secret Garden (Edinburgh / Toronto); Enlightenment (London); Crash (Leeds), Fried Rice Paradise (Singapore); Death of a Salesman (Leeds); Everyone (Edinburgh); Elves and the Shoemakers (Dundee); Equivocation (Manhattan Theatre Club); Peter Pan (Edinburgh).

Current Projects: Testament (Dublin); Written on the Heart (Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford); Big Maggie (Druid, Galway); The Adventures of Pinocchio (Moscow Childrens' Opera); La Périchole (Garsington); Eugene Onegin (Grange Park).

Francis trained at Wimbledon School of Art.



## **Gabriel Preisser (Lieutenant Gordon)**

Praised for his power and presence both as a singer and an actor by the Houston Chronicle, baritone Gabriel Preisser originally hails from the small town of Apopka, Florida. He earned a double major in music at Florida State University and a Master of Music at the University of Houston. At the Moores Opera Center in Houston, he performed such roles as Riolo in Florencia en el Amazonas, Tom Joad in Ricky Ian Gordon's The Grapes of Wrath, Larry Foreman in The Cradle will Rock and the title role of both Don Giovanni and Elmer Gantry. At FSU he was seen as Pooh-bah in The Mikado, Death in Savitri, Achilles in Giulio Cesar and Masetto in Don Giovanni. Recently, Opera News applauded him for a beautifully sung and beautifully portrayed Yamadori from this past fall in Kentucky Opera's production of Madame Butterfly. Gabriel has also been seen as the title role of Il barbiere di Siviglia with Owensboro Symphony, John Brooke in Mark Adamo's Little Women with Pensacola Opera, Papageno in Die Zauberflöte with the Intermezzo Program, Prince Ottokar in Der Freischütz with Des Moines Metro Opera and Jason from Grand Night for Singing with the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, to name a few. Gabriel's concert work includes composers such as Handel, Lully, Vivaldi, Bach, Schütz and Mozart with companies such as Ars Lyrica, Mercury Baroque and Houston Bach Choir, and he was honored as a regional finalist in the 2010 Metropolitan Opera National Council Competition.

This past summer, Mr. Preisser took on the role of Danilo in The Merry Widow and revisited Masetto in Don Giovanni at Utah Festival Opera. For Minnesota Opera's 2011-2012 season, he sings Lieutenant Gordon in Silent Night, Albert in Werther and Prince Yamadori in Madame Butterfly.



## **Eric Simonson (stage director and dramaturg)**

Writer and director Eric Simonson recently directed Rusalka for Colorado Opera. Other directing credits include The Grapes of Wrath at Minnesota Opera, Pittsburgh Opera and Carnegie Hall; numerous plays for Steppenwolf Theatre; and productions at The Huntington Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Primary Stages in New York, Court Theatre in Chicago, L.A. Theatre Works, The Kennedy Center, City Theater in Pittsburgh, Seattle Rep and San Jose Rep. His production of The Song of Jacob Zulu played on Broadway and received six Tony Awards including Best Director. His film directing credits include the documentaries A Note of Triumph: The Golden Age of Norman Corwin (Academy Award), On Tiptoe (Academy Award nomination) and Studs Terkel: Listening to America, all of which aired on HBO. Playwriting

credits include Lombardi (recently running on Broadway), Bang the Drum Slowly, Work Song (co-written with Jeff Hatcher), Honest and Fake. Mr. Simonson is a member of Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science, and unions SDC, WGA and SAG. He is the recipient of the Princess Grace Statue Award for sustained artistic achievement; a Jefferson Citation; the Frankel Award for new play development; and an Emmy nomination and International Documentary Award for his film On Tiptoe. Mr. Simonson is currently overseeing Minnesota's New Works Initiative, which includes the recent production of Bernard Herrmann's Wuthering Heights and the world premiere of Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's Silent Night.



## **Ben Wager (the French General)**

Ben Wager is a 2009 graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, where his roles included: Raimondo in Lucia di Lammermoor, Enrico in Anna Bolena, the title role in Mendelssohn's Elijah, Sparafucile in Rigoletto, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and Padre Guardiano in *La forza del destino*.

Mr. Wager's 2011–2012 season includes dual appearances at Minnesota Opera, as General Audebert in the world premiere of *Silent Night*, and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Additionally, he debuts with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra under Music Director Jacques Lacombe for a series of concerts, returns to the Oregon Symphony as the bass soloist in Haydn's *The Creation* under the baton of Carlos Kalmar and makes his debut with Opera Boston as Capellio in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. Future seasons will include a return to Opera Company of Philadelphia and a new production with Kentucky Opera.

During the 2010–2011 season, Ben Wager maintained a presence in both North American and European opera houses. In the United States, he made debuts with Opera Cleveland as Nourabad in *Les pêcheurs de perles* and the Dallas Opera as Masetto in *Don Giovanni* and returned to Minnesota Opera for the role of Hindley Earnshaw in Bernard Herrmann's *Wuthering Heights*. As a member of the ensemble of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, which he joined in 2009, he sang Panthus in *Les Troyens*, Doctor Grenvil in *La traviata*, Angelotti in *Tosca* and Escamillo in *Carmen*, among other roles.

For the 2009–2010 season, Mr. Wager's assignments at the Deutsche Oper included Zuniga in *Carmen*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, and Sarastro in an abridged version of *Die Zauberflöte*. Additional engagements for the season included Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Mozarteum of Salzburg under Ivor Bolton, Rossini's *Stabat mater* with the Oregon Symphony led by Carlos Kalmar and his debut with the Los Angeles Opera as Julian Pinelli in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten*.

During the 2008–2009 season, he concluded his residency at the Academy of Vocal Arts as Enrico in *Anna Bolena*, Il Vescovo in *La fiamma* and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, joined Minnesota Opera to sing the bass roles in the North American premiere of Jonathan Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio* and made his debut at Opera Company of Philadelphia as Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*.

Mr. Wager spent the summer of 2008 as a member of the prestigious Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera, where he sang the role of Il Commendatore in Catherine Malfitano's production of *Don Giovanni*.

Other notable engagements include: Masetto in *Don Giovanni* for his debut at Chicago Opera Theater, under the baton of Jane Glover; Monterone in *Rigoletto* and *Der Sprecher* in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera New Jersey; and appearances as Kaspar in *Der Freischütz*, Gremin and Zaretsky in Eugene Onegin, Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and the bass soloist in Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Academy of Vocal Arts.

Ben Wager studies with world-renowned voice teacher Bill Schuman.



## **Andrew Wilkowske (Ponchel)**

Andrew Wilkowske – when singing a “virile, sturdy Marcello” or a “garrulous yet endearing” Papageno – displays an engaging combination of musical talent and masterful stage presence. Wilkowske, whose voice has been described as “nimble,” with an “impressively open top,” is one of the most versatile performers on the stage today. A gifted actor as well as singer, Wilkowske’s Papageno in *The Magic Flute* “stole the show” according to the *Washington Post*, and was a “lusty-voiced fellow,” according to *Opera News*.

This season’s engagements are full of American premieres and American diplomats. Wilkowske returns to Skylight Opera Theatre for the premiere of Kirke Mechem’s *The Rivals*, playing the role of Prussian Mercenary Baron von Hakenbock. He will also create the role of Ponchel in the world premiere of Kevin Puts’ and Mark Campbell’s *Silent Night* at Minnesota Opera. In addition, Wilkowske will reprise the role of Henry Kissinger in *Nixon in China* with Eugene Opera and debut the role of Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with Minnesota Opera.

Widely known for his expertise in modern repertoire, Wilkowske recently premiered *Our Basic Nature*, a solo New Music Theater piece by John Glover and Kelley Rourke with American Opera Projects and Nautilus Music Theater. He also recently reprised the role of Noah in *The Grapes of Wrath* with the Collegiate Chorale at Carnegie Hall. As a member of the Minnesota Opera world premiere cast in 2007, he was featured on Garrison Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion* radio show and the complete recording of the opera available on P.S. Classics. In addition, he recently covered the role of Casanova in Minnesota Opera’s 25th Anniversary production of *Dominick Argento’s Casanova’s Homecoming*, sang the role of Geppetto in *Jonathan Dove’s The Adventures of Pinocchio* and Henry Kissinger in *Nixon in China* with Minnesota Opera; and sang in performances of the North American premiere of Howard Shore’s *The Fly* at Los Angeles Opera, conducted by Plácido Domingo.

Other recent engagements include Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera on the James, Bummerli in *The Chocolate Soldier* with Bard Summerscape, Emperor Overall in the critically acclaimed production of *The Emperor of Atlantis* with Boston Lyric Opera, Dandini in *La Cenerentola* with The Minnesota Opera and *Carmina burana* with the Minnesota Orchestra, under the baton of Osmo Vänskä. Wilkowske’s experiences are documented in his award-winning “A Year of Figaro” blog.

Active on the musical theatre stage, Wilkowske’s performance in *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* was called “chilling” and “deeply moving” by the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, and his performance in the world premiere of *Sleeping Beauty* with the Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati earned him a nomination for a Cincinnati Entertainment Award.

Wilkowske has participated in the Merola Opera Program, Glimmerglass Opera’s Young American Artist Program and the Minnesota Opera Resident Artist Program. He is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) and the University of Minnesota Duluth.

## **Karin Wolverton (Anna)**



Soprano Karin Wolverton has been described by *Opera News* “a young soprano to watch”, having “a lovely warm tone, easy agility and winning musicality.” In 2010–2011, Karin joined the Dayton Philharmonic for their gala performance of *Viva Italia!*, sang the role of Pamina with the Minnesota Orchestra in *Die Zauberflöte* and performed Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Omaha. Future engagements include the world premiere of Kevin Puts’ *Silent Night* with the Minnesota Opera, where Karin will take on the challenging role of Anna Sørensen, her Carnegie Hall debut with the Minnesota Orchestra in Nielsen’s *Symphony No. 3* and Mahler’s *Symphony No. 2* with the Chippewa Valley Symphony.

Her engagements for 2009–2010 included *Musetta* in *La bohème* with Minnesota Opera, as well as covering the title role of *Salome* with the

company, and a concert appearance with Great Falls Symphony. Recently she sang the role of Mimi in *La bohème* with Pensacola Opera and sang the Spirit as well as covering the title role in *Rusalka* with Minnesota Opera. Previous engagements for 2008–2009 included a reprisal of her role in *The Grapes of Wrath* with Pittsburgh Opera, the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Piedmont Opera and Mimi in *La bohème* with Teatro Nacional de Managua in Nicaragua. Ms. Wolverton has been seen as Micaëla in *Carmen* with Des Moines Metro Opera, where in previous seasons she was seen in the roles of Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress* and Antonia in *Les contes d' Hoffmann*.

Engagements for 2006–2007 included a return to Minnesota Opera for Antonia in their *Les contes d' Hoffmann*, participation in the world premiere of *The Grapes of Wrath* with both Minnesota Opera and Utah Opera and a soloist engagement with the Eugene Symphony in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. She has performed the role of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at Minnesota Opera where she dazzled audiences as Ines in Donizetti's rarely performed bel canto masterpiece *Maria Padilla* and sang Micaëla in *Carmen* to a warm reception. In recent years she has appeared as Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, the Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Praskowia in *The Merry Widow*, Clotilde in *Norma*, Moira in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and as the Celestial Voice in *Don Carlos*. Ms. Wolverton was a featured soloist in the Minnesota Orchestra's performances of Dvorak's *Te Deum* and sang the role of Mimi in excerpts from *La bohème*.

Ms. Wolverton spent two summers as an apprentice with the Des Moines Metro Opera, covering the role of Marguerite in *Faust* as well as participating in the Scenes Program. She recently graduated with a Master of Arts in Vocal Performance at the University of Minnesota, where she has performed several roles as part of its Opera Theatre: Madame Lidoine in *Dialogue of the Carmelites*, the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Nero in *The Coronation of Poppea*. Partial roles through the Opera Workshop include Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Laetitia in *The Old Maid and the Thief*, Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Agathe in *Der Freischütz* and Micaëla in *Carmen*. Other past engagements include the Second Soprano in Park Square Theatre's production of *Masterclass* and the featured soloist for the University of Minnesota's Sesquicentennial Celebration.

Ms. Wolverton was invited to participate in Central City Opera's Young Artist Program in Colorado where she covered Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and appeared in *The Student Prince*. In December, she sang the role of the Mother in the Minnesota Orchestra's production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.