A SCI-FI OPERA IN THREE ACTS

COMPOSED BY ELENA RUEHR
CREATED BY CERISE LIM JACOBS
COMMISSIONED BY
WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS

SEPTEMBER
16 & 17 7:30 PM
18 3:00 PM

EMERSON
PARAMOUNT CENTER
559 Washington St,
Boston, MA 02111

Artwork by Glynis Anderson
I’m thrilled to welcome you back to the Paramount theater for the world premiere of Elena Ruehr’s *Cosmic Cowboy*. This opera was scheduled to premiere two years ago - in Fall 2020. But the pandemic shuttered theaters and we had to move online. The online move catalyzed our innovative impulses - we invented a new audio plugin - Tutti Remote - which manages latency and enabled us to produce live virtual opera to much acclaim. We have brought some of that technology into the theater as we test a new automated way of presenting surtitles without a title operator.

Re-entering the theater after a two-year absence, we found a changed world of supply chain problems, not just of building materials, but also, of critical personnel. We had to navigate the hazards of hiring key personnel in a shrinking labor pool, keeping our team safe, rehearsing in a new way, and learning how to coexist with a virus that could close down our show before it even got off the ground. We’ve been holding our breaths (while masked, of course) - from excited anticipation, a little trepidation and great hope for a fantastic show. We can finally exhale!

*Cosmic Cowboy* continues the grand experiment White Snake Projects has embarked on - a journey to integrate 21st century technology with a 400-year old art form to create new American opera which centers the issues Americans are grappling with today. We want to explode the old Eurocentric stereotype of what opera is and make a new art form celebrating innovation, musicality, technology and activism, all rolled into exciting, entertaining and relevant storytelling. Our attempt to incorporate cutting edge game technology started with PermaDeath, the world’s first video game opera. For those of you who came to the show, you will remember the 8-foot tall lip syncing avatars and spectacular 3D environments. *Cosmic Cowboy* has all of this, and more - a 360-degree VR sequence, a robot ballet with a real industrial robot - but this show is not just about technology. These engaging devices are vehicles to engage you, our audience, to think about what we as human beings are doing to our planet, and to each other. We hope you’ll come away filled with the wonder of our artistry, creativity, and innovation, and uplifted by the fact that in the face of adversity, love, human kindness, and faith will continue on and indeed, to triumph.

Thank you for coming out to support us today. We are so grateful.

Be safe, be well, keep faith,

Cerise Lim Jacobs,
Opera Maker and Founding Artistic Director
White Snake Projects, An Activist Opera Company
September 16, 2022
COMPOSER’S NOTE

Why a sci-fi opera? Of course, I’m an opera composer so it’s what I do, but I’ve always felt that science fiction and fantasy exist on an over-the-top scale, as opera does. As a teenager, I loved science fiction and fantasy: I read through my local library’s section by the time I was 13. I’m not sure what it is about the genre that compels me, perhaps it is the idea that complex social systems can be remade and rediscovered. I was attracted to Cosmic Cowboy because of this interest.

Cosmic Cowboy uses a small orchestra which includes a synthesized harpsichord. The harpsichord to me is a symbol of an ancient past, and the synthesizer is a symbol of the future. I was very interested in bringing these sounds together. In addition, I used an ancient scale for the composition of the first part of the opera and a modern scale (one note altered from the ancient scale) for Act III. I felt this helped create a sense of change between the past and the future.

Elena Ruehr
DIRECTOR’S NOTE

For a director, working on a new composition is always a combination of challenges, struggles, small joys and great ones. Seeing a piece transformed from words into music, then from a complete score into a design and a production, all of that into a rehearsal process with singers and a whole team of folks to make it all happen, and then onward to opening night; it's an exhilarating and unique experience at every moment.

With Cosmic Cowboy, the exhilaration is further heightened by the opportunity to work within and embrace a variety of technological media, including CGI design, projections, and Virtual Reality. White Snake Projects has always been at the forefront, pushing the envelope of what is possible on an opera stage, and I have had the great pleasure to collaborate with the company previously... with a collection of technologies that, while seemingly cutting edge 5 years ago, already seem quaint in comparison to what is possible now. To get to be in the thick of developing and exploring this technology as a part of the opera experience is exciting, and we are only in the very early stages, as theater and opera artists, of discovering how to use these technologies and figuring out (or perhaps just wondering) how they will transform performance in the next 20 years or century.

Meanwhile, we can’t forget, and you won’t, that around, embedded in, and at the heart of all of this technology is always a story. Cosmic Cowboy is both an intimate portrayal of family rivalry, jealousy, betrayal, love and violence, framed through the lens of epic, divine mythological characters, and also a deep dive into the relationship between the loss of core, primal values, and the ongoing man-made destruction of the planet. Through a score that pulses with violent and explosive energy, the energy of universe-creation, the energy of family drama and love stories, the energy of people and countries willfully angling for power at the cost of humanity, the piece yields endless pathways for speculation and reflection, and even holds us all accountable for our own possible futures.

Now we’re at the end of the process and it’s time to open a show. Dozens, if not hundreds, of creative artists, designers, technicians, programmers, stage crews, have spent years to realize a vision that all began with Cerise Jacobs’ libretto and Elaine Ruehr’s music. I believe you are in for a memorable time at the opera house, and will get to enjoy a unique peek into the future of live performance.

Sam Helfrich
**OPERA MAKER’S NOTE**

*Cosmic Cowboy* is a poli sci-fi opera that blends ancient history and fantasy to talk about the subject of colonization. My twin inspirations were the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock and the historic landing of the space probe Philae on Comet 67P, both of which lead to questions about the colonizing impulse.

I grew up under British colonial rule; I know what it is to be invisible to my colonizers; to have my story and history told by others; to have my future defined by arbitrary lines drawn by others. So, when Boston got ready to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower’s landing at Plymouth Rock, I determined to write an opera exploring colonization and the instinct to subjugate those who are not like oneself. This exploration coalesced with the interest by private industry to get into the business of space exploration and to colonize Mars, for profit, of course. *Cosmic Cowboy* was ripped from these headlines.

“Colonization” is a dry topic, not something that would be on the top ten topics on an opera maker’s list. But when told through fantasy and science fiction, it comes to vibrant life through the main characters – a space probe (now called Cooper), the Sumerian goddess of creation, Tia, and her nemesis, the god of destruction, Marduk. The opera is an eclectic romp through the universe that ranges from the formation of the cosmos by the mating of the Sumerian gods Tiamat and Apsu to a touching pas de deux between Cooper and Tia. It traverses the mystery of time and space, through wormholes, black holes and alternate universes, until it comes full circle into the ultimate mystery - the human heart.

Cerise Lim Jacobs

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**COSMIC COWBOY Rehearsals**

*Photo credit: Charles Calotta*
FEATURING
(in order of appearance)

Lizzy Stant
Carina DiGianfilippo
Xiao Xiao
Juliette Kaoudji
Daon Drisdom
Benjamin Maines
Scott Ballantine
Benedict Hensley

Chelsea Baccay .................................................. Little Tia
Carami Hilaire (Mimi) ......................................... Tiamat/Tia
John Paul Huckle .............................................. Apsu/General Aps
Daniel Moody ................................................... Qingu/Cooper
Tyler Putnam ..................................................... Marduk/Mard
Charlie Calotta .................................................. Mummu/Mr. Mu

CHORUS

Fae Manson, Soprano
Fiona Wolfe, Soprano
Graciela Rodriguez, Soprano
Jillian Ryan, Soprano
Mara Stein, Soprano
Rory Li, Soprano
Amanda Cooper, Alto
Becca Lapham, Alto
Jo Almond, Alto
Kyla Murray, Alto
Magdalena Dolorico-Francoeur, Alto
Saurahya Milien, Alto

Lizzy Stant
Carina DiGianfilippo
Xiao Xiao
Juliette Kaoudji
Daon Drisdom
Benjamin Maines
Scott Ballantine
Benedict Hensley

BOSTON CHILDREN’S CHORUS

Fae Manson, Soprano
Fiona Wolfe, Soprano
Graciela Rodriguez, Soprano
Jillian Ryan, Soprano
Mara Stein, Soprano
Rory Li, Soprano
Amanda Cooper, Alto
Becca Lapham, Alto
Jo Almond, Alto
Kyla Murray, Alto
Magdalena Dolorico-Francoeur, Alto
Saurahya Milien, Alto

DANCERS

Olivia Mozie
Jackson Bradford

UNDERSTUDIES

Danielle Pribyl .......................... Tiamat/Tia
Gift Anyagwochu ....................... Apsu/General Aps
Keith Wehmeier .......................... Qingu/Cooper
Thomas Valle-Hoag .................... Marduk/Mard
Timothy Ayres-Kerr ................... Mummu/Mr. Mu

Tiamat/Tia
Apsu/General Aps
Qingu/Cooper
Marduk/Mard
Mummu/Mr. Mu

Oliver Caplan, Artistic Director

Sam Thurston, trumpet .......................... Lu Yu, viola
Anne Howarth, horn .............................. Dilshod Narzillaev, cello
Michael Bellofatto, horn ...................... Pete Walsh, bass
Mina Lavcheva, violin ......................... Julia Scott Carey, keyboard
Sophia Bernitz, violin .......................... Tom Schmidt, percussion
COMMISSIONED BY WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS
SCENE 1: The Mixing of the Saltwater and the Freshwater (or the Big Bang)
The opera starts with the Sumerian epic poem of creation, the Enuma Elish, which fits poetically into the Big Bang theory. Tiamat, the saltwater ocean and her consort, Apsu, a river of freshwater have sex. They birth the universe in a huge explosion like the Big Bang.

SCENE 2: Just after the Big Bang
Tiamat and Apsu rest in each other’s arms after giving birth to the universe. Their children drag Tiamat from Apsu’s arms. Qingu, their son, and Tiamat’s lover, enters with Little Tia, the daughter of their incestuous union. Tiamat makes love to Qingu, enraging Apsu. He plots with Vizier Mummu to kill the children and reclaim his place. When Tiamat finds out, she casts Apsu away.

Tiamat teaches the children their creation story, about the primacy of Chaos to natural development and their destiny to bring love to the universe. Marduk, another of Tiamat and Apsu’s sons, enters. He overhears Tiamat speaking about the power of love to change the world. He sneers and counters with “Power” - raw naked Power - that’s what he believes will change the world. The children cower before their brother, but Little Tia tells Marduk he’s wrong.

SCENE 3: The Slaughter of Apsu
Apsu’s plan to kill his children is leaked. Marduk preempts Apsu by killing him in his sleep. He seizes the Scepter of Winds which gives him control over the winds of the world, vowing to eliminate all Chaos and Tiamat’s teachings.

SCENE 4: The Vengeance of Tiamat
Tiamat makes Qingu Commander of her forces. She gives him the Table of Destinies which controls the fate of all things and commands him to kill his father’s assassins.

SCENE 5: The Great Battle
A great battle ensues. Marduk appoints himself Commander of the opposing forces. He captures his mother in his Net of Winds. Qingu tries to save her but is struck down. As Tiamat dies, her tears form the rivers, her body the Milky Way. Marduk exterminates all her people, but one – Little Tia escapes through a wormhole. Marduk vows to hunt her down and eliminate her, the last trace of Tiamat, of Chaos. He determines to bring Order to the world.

INTERLUDE
IN THE WORMHOLE

As Marduk embarks on his quest for absolute power, the Choruses sing the Song of the Invisible - the song sung by those who are colonized.
ACT 2
THE CHASE

The Chase spans millennia as Marduk pursues Tia through time and space, through the five extinctions, the beginning of human civilization, the rise and fall of empires, and into the future. Marduk’s armies march into Africa, Asia, the Americas, Australia, etc, colonizing and proselytizing as they conquer these lands.

They land on several colonies – Singapore, Uluru, Plymouth Rock. Marduk traps Tia on a Black Hole. He raises his sword. As Tia gathers herself to spring away, Marduk’s momentum carries him forward and the powerful gravitational pull of the Black Hole pulls him in. Tia sees Comet 67P passing by, and springs on it, riding to freedom.

ACT 3
MANY EONS LATER

SCENE 1: At Control Headquarters, Earth and Pioneer Station, Mars
Scientists at Control Headquarters, Earth, and Pioneer Station, Mars, are glued to their monitors. The spaceship, Mayflower, is hovering over Comet 67P. A probe is ejected and tumbles down. Its landing gear fails to deploy. It bounces around on the Comet and comes to rest under a cliff – a disaster – as it’s in shadow and cannot recharge its solar batteries. It begins transmitting, then goes dead.

SCENE 2: On Comet 67P
Tia finds the probe. They begin a slow “getting to know you” dance. Each time Tia advances, the probe retreats. When she backs off, it reaches forward, until finally they touch. Tia gives Cooper her full god-name: Tia, Ninhursag, Ki, Nimah, Nintu, Goddess of Earth, Goddess of Life. The probe tells her the scientists call him “Probe”, “that machine”, “the robot”, “the drill” but he has named himself Cooper – after Gary Cooper, the cowboy star of his favorite western, “High Noon.” Cooper asks Tia to move him into sunlight to recharge. Instead, Tia transforms into a shaft of energy and charges him. Cooper is excited to have this “data dump.” He shares Tia’s ineffable memories and sees the Enuma Elish.

SCENE 3: At Control Headquarters, Earth and Pioneer Station, Mars
The scientist cannot believe what they’re seeing on their monitors as they watch Tia and Cooper dancing. They are awed when they realize that they’re seeing an extraterrestrial being.

SCENE 4: Shortly After Watching Tia and Cooper Dance
Mr. Mu, President of Mu Mars Corp and the first to colonize Mars, determines to capture Tia. He wants to harness her energy to speed up the terraforming of Mars. He tells General Aps, the head of Earth’s space agency, and his co-conspirator, to send an astronaut to retrieve her. The General decides to send Commander Mard.

SCENE 5: On Comet 67P
Cooper is probing, whirring and jiggering as he analyzes soil samples. Tia brings him small rocks to analyze. She tells Cooper she is charged with patrolling the Milky Way and keeping humankind safe. Cooper calls her the Cosmic Cowboy. Tia confides that she’s being pursued by Marduk who has a Net of Winds to capture her.
SCENE 6: In Space Approaching Comet 67P
Commander Mard lands on the Comet. Cooper asks Tia to blast him with her godly powers. She responds that she’s ready for him, ready for the final confrontation.

SCENE 7: On Comet 67P, Control Headquarters and Pioneer Station
Tia tells Commander Mard that she knows he’s really Marduk in disguise. She asks why he has this vendetta against her. He says that it’s the “idea” of Tia that must die; the idea of Chaos, of freedom, of love. Order is the only way for humanity to survive - rules, rationality, technology – that’s the future. Power is the only god capable of enforcing order. He is humankind’s savior. He tells Tia to embrace her God, the one and only true God. She embraces him.

Marduk springs the Net of Winds over Tia. She screams in agony. Cooper begins cutting the Net. Marduk boasts that his Net cannot be destroyed by magic or godly power. Cooper is undeterred. His probe is no magic probe; it has no godly power. It’s just a plain ole probe. It’s High Noon, it’s time for him to save the day. There is an almighty CRACK as the Net gives way. The winds sweep out of Tia and she steps from the Net. She raises her hands and the Comet splits in half. She’s on its tail; Cooper and Marduk are on the other end. She begins to move away.

Marduk screams that he’ll weave a deadlier Net of Winds. Tia holds up the Scepter of Winds. She stole it from him when she embraced him. Cooper begs her to take him with her. She tells Cooper he must stay, that he’s the Cosmic Cowboy now. It’s his job to patrol the universe and keep humankind safe. They dance on their respective halves of the comet. They stretch towards each other, but can no longer touch. Tia wheels the comet around and rides into the sun.
CARAMI HILAIRE
(Tiamat/Tia)

Carami Hilaire is a soulful soprano from Brooklyn, New York who is a graduate of the Professional Studies program at Mannes. She is a Julian Autrey foundation grant winner and a 2017 Harlem Opera Competition first prize winner. Carami has also received awards from both the Wagner Society of New York and the Premiere Opera competition. She has sung with the Internationale Opernwerkstatt based in Switzerland. She has performed the role of Tosca with both Regina Opera and New Jersey Verismo Opera to rave reviews as well as the roles of Aida and Musetta. This fall she will sing the role of Tia in the Cosmic Cowboy with White Snake Opera projects and in Winter 2021, she will sing the role of Lady Macbeth with Knoxville Opera.

CHARLIE CALOTTA
(Mummu/Mr. Mu)

Noted for his fresh lyric voice, innate musicality and skilled acting, tenor Charles Calotta is building an impressive reputation. His creativity and unusual versatility make him an outstanding presence on any stage.

Charles has performed with Prague Summer Nights, Lyrique International de Belle-Ile Festivals, Florida Grand Opera, Opera North, Dell’Arte Ensemble and the Maryland Opera Studio in traditional roles like Tamino in Die Zauberflöte and Almaviva in Il Barbiere di Siviglia, and has received critical acclaim for his performances in contemporary literature, including Gregory Spears’ Fellow Travelers, Michael Nyman’s The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, and André Previn’s A Streetcar Named Desire.

2022 engagements include Ferrando in Così fan Tutte for Opera North, Almaviva with the Winter Harbor Music Festival in Maine, and the world premiere of Elena Ruehr’s Cosmic Cowboy with White Snake Productions. In concert he will be heard in the Saint-Saëns Requiem and Beethoven’s Mass in C with the Wallingford Symphony, the Glens Falls Symphony, and the Astoria Choir.

DANIEL MOODY
(Qingu/Cooper)

Countertenor Daniel Moody has garnered widespread acclaim for his "sweet and melancholy sound" (The Washington Post) and his ability to "pierce hearts" and "utterly silence a room" (The Boston Musical Intelligencer). Cited for a "vocal resonance [that] makes a profoundly startling impression" (The New York Times) and his "vivid and powerful" voice (The Boston Musical Intelligencer), Moody is equally celebrated for his interpretations of contemporary and baroque works.

Moody’s opera appearances have included the title roles in Handel’s Giulio Cesare and Alcina, Arsamene in Xerxes, Lichas in Hercules, Didymus in Theodora, Oberon in Britten’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream, L’Enfant in Ravel’s L’Enfant et les sortileges, and the “eerie yet forceful” (Broadway World) leading role of Man #1 in the world premiere of Desire by composer Hannah Lash.

Moody is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory, Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music and has won several awards in competitions which include Metropolitan National Council Auditions, George London Competition, Handel Aria Competition, New York Oratorio Society Competition, and Russell Wonderlic Competition.

TAYLOR PUTNAM
(Marduk/Mard)

Possessing a voice described as “robust and resonant” by TheatreMania and deemed a “standout” by Opera Magazine, bass-baritone Tyler Putnam is in demand in a variety of repertoire. Recent performances include The Pirate King in The Pirates of Penzance with Opera Tampa, Colline in La bohème with Gulfshore Opera, Guglielmo in Così fan tutte with St. Petersburg Opera Florida, Figaro in Le nozze di Figaro with Geneva Light Opera, and Don Alhambra in The Gondoliers with Winter Opera St. Louis.

An apprentice at The Santa Fe Opera for two seasons, he debuted the role of Kobun in a workshop performance of Mark Campbell and Mason Bates’ The Revolution of Steve Jobs, sang Zweiter Soldat in Salome, and originated the role of Thomas in the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s Cold Mountain. Originally from Chebeague Island, Maine, Tyler Putnam is a graduate of Dartmouth College.
JOHN PAUL HUCKLE  
(Apsu/General Aps)

Lauded for his “grand voice, with a rich and colorful timbre, and beautiful smooth legato” (Anaclase.com), bass John Paul Huckle has established himself as an international talent of immense promise. A favorite among Italian audiences, Mr. Huckle began his 2019-20 season with multiple appearances at the Teatro Carlo Felice where he sang the role of Bonzo in Madama Butterfly and Angelotti in Tosca and Quinault in Adriana Lecouvreur. During the summer of 2021, Mr. Huckle returned to the US through Central City Opera to reprise Sparafucile in Rigoletto and debut as Jigger Craigin in Carousel. In the 2021-2022 season, Mr. Huckle sang Lodovico in Verdi’s Otello with Pacific Symphony and made his debut with Boston Modern Opera Project as 2nd Crapshooter in The Jumping Frog (Foss/Karsavina). In the summer of 2022, Mr. Huckle will cover Vanuzzi in Strauss’ Die Schwiegseame Frau with Bard Summerscape and in the fall, he will make his Salt Marsh Opera debut as Simone in Gianni Schicchic and Usher in Trial by Jury and his debut with White Snake Projects as Apsu/General Aps in Cosmic Cowboys (Ruehr/Jacobs). In 2023, he will return to Teatro Carlo Felice for their production of Un Ballo in Maschera.

CHELSEA BACCAY  
(Little Tia)

Chelsea Baccay, Filipino-American soprano, just finished the summer season performing Yniold in Pelléas et Mélisande, L’Amore in Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria, Conception and Young Juana cover in the professional premiere of Juana all with dell’Arte Opera Ensemble; as well as performing with Boston Lyric Opera in their Concert in the Courtyard series. Other recent highlights include Ligeti’s Nouvelles Aventures at Jordan Hall and The Handmaid’s Tale with BLO. She has degrees from New England Conservatory and Northwestern University.

CARINA DIGIANFILIPPO  
(Chorus: Soprano)

Italian-American Soprano, Carina DiGianfilippo, has been praised by The Boston Globe for her “winsome” voice and hailed a “vision” by the Theatre Times. She was most recently seen as Cupidon in Offenbach’s Orphée aux enfers with the Opera Company of Middlebury in Vermont. This past season, she performed as Violetta in Verdi’s La Traviata with MassOpera in Boston, made her film debut as Charlene in Helios Opera’s production of Service Provider, and was a part of the inaugural concert of Upper Valley Baroque in New Hampshire. She has performed globally, winning First Place in the Concorso Internazionale Rolando Nicolosi Competition in Italy, and has sung in China as both a young artist with the iSING! International Young Artists Festival and as a guest artist with the Xi’an Symphony Orchestra. Miss DiGianfilippo holds music degrees from Manhattan School of Music and Syracuse University. For more credits, please visit www.carinadigianfilippo.com.

LIZZY STANT  
(Chorus: Soprano)

Soprano Lizzy Stant, from Dover, Delaware, graduated with her Master of Music degree in Voice from NEC in 2021. She is very excited to make her stage debut with White Snake Productions. Her staged performances include opera, musical theater, chamber works, and new music. Most recently, she was seen playing First Lady in Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte with Miami Music Festival, the Ghost of Christmas Past in Humbug! at Franklin Performing Arts Company, and Rapunzel in Into the Woods with North End Music and Performing Arts Company. Past credits include Rosina (Cover) in Il Barbiere di Figiviglia, Geneva in Ariodante (Scenes), and Souer Mathilde in Dialogues des Carmélites.

She is a passionate pedagog and activist for equity in the arts. She operates her own private studio in Boston and teaches at Franklin School for the Performing Arts. Along with singing, Lizzy plays lead rhythm guitar in Veronica Roble’s All Female Mariachi Ensemble.
JULIETTE KAOUDJI  
(Chorus: Alto)
Mezzo-Soprano Juliette Kaoudji’s most recent performances were at the New England Conservatory Blackbox Theatre as Dido and Aeneas as Dido by Henry Purcell and as Maman and Pâtre in L’Enfant et les sortilèges by Maurice Ravel. In fall of 2021, she performed in the modern opera, Svadba as Nada by Ana Sokolovic and the NEC movie production of The Dialogue of the Carmelites as Mere Jeune. She played the title role of Mayrik in the 2019 premier of Role Playing Game by NEC alumni Jacob Schulman. She oversaw 2 productions of 4 opera scenes at the Soldiers Home in Chelsea and NEC sponsored by a grant awarded by the Entrepreneurial Musicianship department. This Boston Arts Academy alumni received her Bachelors in Music 2020 and Masters in Music 2022 from NEC. She will begin NEC’s Graduate Diploma program this fall under the instruction of her voice teacher Ms. Carole Haber.

XIAO XIAO  
(Chorus: Alto)
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BEN MAINES  
(Chorus: Tenor)
Ben Maines is an American tenor who has been praised for his “attractive tone” and “rich color”. Ben is a native of East Lansing, Michigan. He received his undergrad degree from Michigan State University and studied with Richard Fracker. Some of Ben’s notable roles were Dr.Blind (Die Fledermaus), Gherardo (Gianni Schicchi), and Fredrick (Pirates of P anzance). Currently, Ben is studying with renown soprano, Jane Eaglen, at The New England Conservatory where he is getting his master’s degree.

DAON DRISDOM  
(Chorus: Tenor)
Praised for his rich tone and incredible stage presence, tenor Daon Drisdom’s classical credits include performances in the baritone and tenor repertoires. Portrayal’s ranging from Papageno in Mozart’s The Magic Flute to Fritz in Mascagni’s L’amico Fritz are performances to his success. He has been a featured soloist with notable names such as John Bucchino and jazz trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, as part of Wycliffe Gordon and Friends for a holiday performance on Georgia Public Broadcasting Radio in 2016. He can be heard on Funmilayo Ngozi’s Unconstrained album as a background vocalist and as soloist on the track Faith. Drisdom also has made notable contributions with YouTube inspirational group Trey McLaughlin & the Sounds of Zamar. Currently, he is a J. P. Hunsaker soloist at the First Parish in Milton and serves as the new chorus teacher at the Boston Latin Academy with efforts to build a strong music program at the esteemed school.
Originally from Massachusetts, Benedict Hensley (Baritone) is happy to be back in New England pursuing a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance at New England Conservatory where he studies with Carole Haber. He recently completed his Bachelor of Music at the Bienen School of Music studying under Theresa Brancaccio. Benedict has a particular interest in early music and concert music and recently recorded BWV 82: Ich habe Genug with members of the Northwestern Baroque Music Ensemble. His most recent operatic roles and performances include Jim in New England Conservatory's production of Jack Perla's An American Dream; Apollo in Northwestern Opera Theater's virtual production of Monteverdi's L'Orfeo; and Bob in Northwestern's OPUS production of The Old Maid and the Thief. Benedict has also had the privilege to study and perform under the tutelage of William Lewis and John McGuire at the Austrian American Mozart Academy.

Baritone, Scott Ballantine, has maintained a busy performing schedule in New England and across the United States. He recently made his Boston Symphony Hall debut as Dottore Grenvil with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra and in 2022-23 will return to Opera for the Young as Figaro in The Barber of Seville. Equally at home in musical theatre, Ballantine was a festival artist with Utah Festival Opera, singing Oliver Hix in The Music Man and covering Captain Phoebus in The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Additionally, he has worked with companies such as St. Petersburg Opera Company, Natchez Festival of Music, Dayton Opera, and Connecticut Lyric Opera. Ballantine has an affinity for contemporary opera - some of his favorite roles performed include Hannah Before in As One, Beau in Service Provider and the title role in Fantastic Mr. Fox. A native of Colorado, he left the mountain west in pursuit of his M.M. at The Boston Conservatory. Please visit www.scottballantine.com to learn more.

Boston Children’s Chorus' vibrant, jubilant, and powerful performances have established them as leading young artists in the city of Boston and beyond. Nationally recognized for their innovative programming, passionate artistry, and ability to connect to audiences, Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) showcases the talent and passion of the diverse young people of our city.

BCC is committed to providing the youth of Greater Boston and beyond an opportunity to experience the transformative power of music. Named Boston’s “Ambassadors of Harmony” by the Boston Globe, BCC presents over 50 performances per season in a wide range of public and private events. They have performed in venues from Boston Symphony Hall, and Royal Albert Hall in London, to Sydney Opera House, and the White House.

In 2013, they were presented with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, distinguishing BCC as one of the top arts and humanities based programs in the nation; BCC accepted the award from First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House.
Olivia Mozie, resident of Greenville, SC, began dancing at the age of four at the School of Carolina Ballet Theater under the direction of Hernan Justo and Anita Paclyowski-Justo. She continued her training at English Theatre Arts, under Barbara English, and The Fine Arts Center. She continued her training her sophomore year of high school at the South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities, where she studied under Josee Garant, Miriam Mesa-Pelly, Tracy Vogt, Thomas Shoemaker, and Irina Ushakova. She later graduated from SCGSAH in 2020. She has placed top 12 in Contemporary and Classical Variations at Youth America Grand Prix. She was awarded full-tuition scholarships to attend summer intensives with Alvin Ailey, Ballet West, and Kansas City Ballet. Olivia now attends Boston Conservatory at Berklee, as a merit scholar, to pursue a B.F.A. in Contemporary Dance Performance. While at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, she has performed reworked works on the mainstage including: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar’s “Shelter,” restaged by Maria Bauman, “La Vivandière,” restaged by Gianni Di Marco and Adriana Suarez, and Jimmy Viera’s original work, “The Count Meets Duke.” As of the summer of 2022, she continued her studies with The New York City Rockettes and Complexions Contemporary Ballet.

Jackson Bradford is thrilled to be participating in The Cosmic Cowboy Opera. Jackson began dance training at various schools throughout the Chicagoland area. Jackson graduated High School from the Chicago Academy for the Arts in 2020. Jackson has also attended summer training programs at Mark Morris Dance Theatre, Arts Umbrella, Cincinnati Ballet, Zeitgeist Dance Theatre, Jose Limon Dance Company, and Ballet West. After High School Jackson continued his training as a Trainee at Ballet West for one year. Now Jackson is pursuing his BFA in Dance from The Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

Juventas New Music Ensemble is a contemporary chamber group with a special focus on emerging voices. Juventas shares classical music as a vibrant, living art form. We bring audiences music from a diverse array of composers that live in today’s world and respond to our time.

Since its founding in 2005, Juventas has performed the music of over 200 living composers. The ensemble has earned a reputation as a curator with a keen eye for new talent. It opens doors for composers with top-notch professional performances that present their work in the best possible light.

Recognition for the ensemble’s work includes the American Prize Ernst Bacon Award for Performance of American Music and support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Cultural Council, and Boston Foundation. Juventas is featured on albums by Innova Recordings, Parma Records and New Dynamic Records, and has held residencies at Boston Conservatory, Harvard University, Longy School of Music, Middlebury College, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.
UNDERSTUDIES

DANIELLE PRIBY
(Tiamat/Tia)

Danielle Pribyl is a young, up-and-coming soprano from San Clemente, California. Currently based in Boston, she completed her Masters Degree under the tutelage of Dr. Lynn Eustis. Danielle made her international debut as Zerlina in the Stavoské Divadlo in Prague this July. At BU, Danielle performed the roles of Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro, Littler Sister in Proving Up and Selena in If I Were You. Her other roles include Zweite Dame, Zweite Knabe, and Papagena in Die Zauberflöte, Despina in Così fan Tutte, Maren in Thom Sharpe’s Threshold of Silence and Lucretia in ScienceNV’s The Brides of God.

TIMOTHY AYRES-KERR
(Munnu/Mr. Mu)

Timothy Ayres-Kerr, tenor, teaches voice at Dean College & Franklin School for the Performing Arts while maintaining an active and diverse performance schedule that spans opera, musical theater, popular styles, & original compositions. He holds a BM in vocal performance and MM in vocal pedagogy from The New England Conservatory. Tim composed the award-winning and often performed ‘A Game of Werewolf’ and was Grand Prize Winner of the NEC low-latency project grant to create and compose BardQuest—an interactive virtual musical adventure. Tim hopes to continue challenging established beliefs, singing old songs, and making things that you’ve never seen before.

KEITH WEHMEIER
(Qinqu/Cooper)

Countertenor Keith Wehmeier is a native of St. Louis, Missouri. Most recently, he portrayed the role of Polinesso in Handel’s Ariodante with Opera NEO. While in his Post-Graduate studies at the New England Conservatory, Keith performed the role of the Sorceress in Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas. In his debut season as a countertenor, Keith played the role of Oberon in Benjamin Britten’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream at the Miami Music Festival to great acclaim. The South Florida Classical Review said of his performance, “Keith Wehmeier’s countertenor voice was both strong and dulcet and he phrased the text with subtlety.”

GIFT ANYAGWOCHU
(Apsu/General Aps)

Gift Anyagwochu has completed his two years diploma program in Music (voice) at the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) where he studied under Joseph Oparamanuike. He is currently a graduate student at the Longy School of Music studying voice under David Small. In 2018, he won the best Bel Canto voice in the MUSON. Gift performs widely and has given performances with the Boston Lyric Opera, Newburyport Chorale Society, MassOpera, MUSON Virtual Festival, and a few. He made his M uson Opera debut in 2017 as Papageno in Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte. He aspires to be one of the best African Baritones to perform in major Opera houses both locally and internationally.

THOMAS VALLE-HOAG
(Marduk/Mard)

Baritone Thomas Valle-Hoag is originally from Concord, MA. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a Bachelor of Arts in Latin Language and Literature at Oberlin College and Conservatory, and a Master of Sacred Music degree from the University of Notre Dame.

An avid performer of music of all genres, Thomas has performed opera, musical theater, art song, and contemporary song in concert. Thomas sings with Upper Valley Baroque in Hanover, NH and Cappella Clausura in Boston. Recent credits include the chorus of ...(Iphigenia) with Octopus Theatricals and Pa Zegner in Proving Up with Notre Dame Opera Theater.

UNDERSTUDIES
Composer Elena Ruehr's work has been described as "sumptuously scored and full of soaring melodies" (The New York Times), and "unspeakably gorgeous" (Gramophone). Winner of a Guggenheim Fellowship, she has also been a fellow at Harvard's Radcliffe Institute and composer-in-residence with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, which performed and recorded her major orchestral works (O'Keeffe Images, BMOP Sound) as well as the opera Toussaint Before the Spirits (Arsis Records). She has numerous recordings, on regular NPR playlists, including: Icarus (Avie), Six String Quartets by Elena Ruehr (Avie), Averno (Avie), Jane Wang considers the Dragonfly (Albany), Lift (Avie), Shimmer (Albany) and Shadow Light (Acis). Known for her collaborations with writers and poets, she has written five operas, five cantatas, as well as a great deal of orchestral music, chamber music and songs. She has also written for film and dance. Dr. Ruehr lives in Brookline and is an award winning faculty member at MIT.

Cerise Lim Jacobs creates new American opera from her chequered past in multicultural Singapore, and her sojourns around the world. Her original libretti are inspired by the myths that live in our imaginations and the excitement of current events and people she encounters. She is the founder of White Snake Projects, an activist opera company that produces original opera with activist themes. Her work includes Ouroboros Trilogy, comprising Naga (by Scott Wheeler), Gilgamesh (by Paola Prestini) and the 2011 Pulitzer Prize winning Madame White Snake (by Zhou Long). Ouroboros Trilogy was hailed as "enchanted" (Boston Globe) and "binge worthy" (Boston Musical Intelligencer). "The music should be heard, the production should be seen and there is wisdom in the text." (BMINT). Cerise's other operas include REV. 23 with Julian Wachner (2017) which received its NYC premiere in 2020; PermaDeath: A Video Game Opera, the first in the world using real time facial motion capture, with Dan Visconti (2018); I Am A Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams (2019) and Alice in the Pandemic (2020), both with Jorge Sosa. Alice has been acquired by the Library of Congress as a work of artistic excellence during pandemic times.

Sam Helfrich is an opera and theater director based in New York. He has directed opera productions at New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Portland Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Spoleto Festival/USA, Virginia Opera, Opera Boston, Pittsburgh Opera, and Wolf Trap, among others. Recent opera highlights include the Austrian premiere of Péter Eötvös’ Angels in America at the Salzburger Landestheater, the west coast premiere of Elizabeth Cree, by Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell, at West Edge Opera, the world premiere of Permedeath, with White Snake Productions in Boston, the world premiere of Jeffrey Smith's Why is Eartha Kitt Trying to Kill Me at Urban Arias in Washington DC, Mozart’s The Magic Flute with the Indianapolis Symphony, a staging of Haydn’s Creation with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the New York premiere of Angels in America at New York City Opera and the Salzburger Landestheater, the world premiere of Dan Sonenberg’s The Summer King at Pittsburgh Opera (and, recently, at Michigan Opera Theater), Bach’s St. John Passion with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Mark Anthony Turnage’s Greek at Boston Lyric Opera, Offenbach’s Orpheus in the Underworld at Virginia Opera, the world premiere of Enemies: A Love Story, by Ben Moore, at Palm Beach Opera, Embedded, by composer Patrick Soluri, at Fargo-Moorhead Opera and Ft. Worth Opera, Strauss’ Ariadne auf Naxos at Virginia Opera, Jake Heggie’s Dead Man Walking at Eugene Opera, Andre Previn’s A Streetcar Named Desire at Virginia Opera, the American premiere of Philip Glass’ Kepler at Spoleto Festival/USA, Adams’ Nixon in China at Eugene Opera, a fully staged Messiah with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the world premiere of Michael Dellaira’s The Secret Agent at Center for Contemporary Opera in New York, the Armel Opera Festival in Hungary, and Opera Avignon, The Turn of the Screw at Boston Lyric Opera, Philip Glass’ Orphée at Pittsburgh Opera, Virginia Opera, Portland Opera, and Glimmerglass Opera, and Anthony Davis' Amistad at Spoleto Festival/USA. Recent theater credits include Neil LaBute’s In a Dark Dark House with Knife Edge Productions, off-Broadway productions of Owned, a world premiere play by Julian Sheppard, and Tape, by Stephen Belber, a double bill of plays by Shaw and De Musset at the Franklin Stage Company, and Arthur Miller’s After The Fall at NYU/Tisch Grad Acting. BA (Russian Literature), M.F.A. (Theatre Arts) Columbia University.
CREATIVE TEAM

TIAN HUI NG
(Music Director)
Tianhui Ng is the Music Director of White Snake Projects, where he has led more than 40 premieres since 2020, including Cerise Jacobs and Jorge Sosa’s Alice in the Pandemic which was chosen by the Library of Congress for their special collection recognizing the production as one of the most significant works of art in America during the pandemic. Known for his thoughtful, sensitive work with singers and composers, Tian has led performances of unusual firsts like Irin Ajo, a new Yoruba opera, by Nigerian-American composer, Olabode Amojola and José Javier Peña Aguayo’s Prints of Lost Breath which connects the #BLM protests in Loisa, Puerto Rico with the Bomba. This season, Tian looks forward to the release of his first album with the Lviv National Philharmonic of Ukraine on Nimbus, a series of performances with the Victory Platers in collaboration with New England Public Media on National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service, and his debut with the New England

DEDALUS WAINWRIGHT
(Set Designer)
Dedalus is a set designer & visual artist based in Harlem NYC by way of the Boston area. Dedalus is interested in creating intimate to spectacular visual experiences in theaters, galleries and public spaces. Recent projects include: Offshoot Collaborations / Gallery Kayafas; Elizabeth Cree / Sam Helfrich / West Edge Opera; Cunningham (Film) / Alla Kovgan; The Sound of A Broken String / Dmitri Krymov / The School of Drama, New School; Doctor Faustus / Ronald Bashford / Amherst College. He has an ongoing collaboration with choreographer Parijat Desai. From 1999-2010, He was a cofounding member of Kinodance Company (kinodance.org). dedaluswainwright.com

REBECCA KANACH
(Costume Designer)
Rebecca Kanach is a Barrymore Award-winning costume designer. In New York, her work has been seen at The Guggenheim, the Lincoln Center, Ars Nova’s ANT Fest, La MaMa, The New Ohio, and Joe’s Pub. Regionally, her work has been seen at companies including The Arden Theatre Company, Opera Philadelphia, The Wilma Theater, . Academic collaborations have been at Drexel University, Swarthmore, and Temple University. Rebecca is the co-founder and resident costume designer of The Bearded Ladies Cabaret, and a company member of Lightning Rod Special, whose performance of The Appointment was listed as one of the New York Times’ Best Theater of 2019. She is a MFA graduate from NYU Tisch.

JON ROBERTSON
(Sound Designer/ Audio Engineer)
Jon Robertson is a composer and sound designer based in Kansas City; an adjunct instructor at Missouri Western State University Cinema and Music Technology departments, he has previously taught at University of Missouri- Kansas City and the Kansas City Art Institute. He composes for film and theatre, as well as working as a recording engineer and sound designer. He currently works with theatres and production companies creating high-quality audio content for online media during the COVID-19 era.

NIHAN YESIL
(Sound Designer)
Nihan Yesil is an award-winning composer and sound artist. Her music has been performed in various venues, festivals, and artist residencies across the U.S. and Europe. Currently based in two cities across the continents, Los Angeles and Istanbul, Nihan composes both acoustic and electroacoustic concert music, as well as working for film and theatre.
CREATIVE TEAM

DESERK VEN HEL (Lighting Designer)

Derek returns to White Snake Projects after previously designing PermaDeath in 2018. Based in Brooklyn, NY, Derek’s designs have been seen in venues large and small; from Jazz At Lincoln Center, The Town Hall, The Public Theatre, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, to the kinds of basements, bars, churches, and teeny-tiny rooms where New York theatre is often forged. He is especially drawn to new works, and has contributed to dozens of premiers and workshop productions. Notable collaborations include New York City Opera, Madison Opera, Doug Varone and Dancers, The Montana Repertory Theatre, Finger Lakes Opera, Under The Radar, Syracuse Opera, Red Fern Theatre Company, Palm Beach Opera, Actor’s Studio Drama School, Scandinavian American Theatre, Origin Theatre, and The Civilians. His award-winning designs for Ren Gyo Soh’s Butoh Medea have been seen in Italy, Turkey, Poland, Czechia, and at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

GREG EMETAZ (Projections Designer)

Greg Emetaz (Video Designer) is a filmmaker and video designer based in New York. For stage: Fire Shut Up in My Bones The Metropolitan Opera, La Fanciulla Del West National Center for Performing Arts – Beijing, La Clemenza Di Tito LA Opera, Tristan Und Isolde Croatian National Theatre, to the kinds of basements, bars, churches, and teeny-tiny rooms where New York theatre is often forged. He is especially drawn to new works, and has contributed to dozens of premiers and workshop productions. Notable collaborations include New York City Opera, Madison Opera, Doug Varone and Dancers, The Montana Repertory Theatre, Finger Lakes Opera, Under The Radar, Syracuse Opera, Red Fern Theatre Company, Palm Beach Opera, Actor’s Studio Drama School, Scandinavian American Theatre, Origin Theatre, and The Civilians. His award-winning designs for Ren Gyo Soh’s Butoh Medea have been seen in Italy, Turkey, Poland, Czechia, and at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

GIANNI DI MARCO (Choreographer)

Marco joined the Boston Conservatory at Berklee in 2006 as an instructor in partnering and advanced ballet technique, and is a professor of dance. He also teaches somatic and advanced partnering repertoire. In 2016, he started Step by Step!, a dance program for children with autism.

Di Marco began his dance career with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, where he was promoted to first soloist. He has also performed with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal, Opera Leipzig Ballet, Boston Ballet, Festival Ballet Providence, and Tony Williams Dance Company. His roles include Romeo and Mercutio in Rudi van Dantzig’s Romeo and Juliet and pas de deux in Petipa's Don Quixote, as well as works by Balanchine, Nacho Duato, J. Kylän, Hans van Manen, Cranko, Danny Pelzig, and others.

Di Marco has choreographed more than 50 original works, including Muñecas (2009), On the Brink(2007), and In the Window (2012) for Boston Conservatory, La Rondine (2003) for the Boston Lyric Opera, and Orpheus (2012) for Boston Baroque. He has created works for Boston Ballet, including The Nutcracker (1996), Dance on the Top Floor (1998), Raw Dance (2002-2005), and various gala balls (1999-2016), as well as multiple works for Festival Ballet, including Lady of the Camellias (2016), Scheherazade (2005), and El Amor Brujo (2009).

Di Marco has been teaching ballet and movement to children and adults since 2000. In addition to Boston Conservatory, he has taught at Boston Ballet Center for Dance Education, Harvard University, University of South Carolina, and Walnut Hill School for the Arts. He was the principal of Citydance, a Boston Public Schools outreach program. In 2002, he founded Adaptive Dance with Micheline Cassella, a program for children with Down syndrome and autism, at Boston Ballet Center for Dance Education.

Di Marco is a graduate of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. He has studied with the National Ballet of Cuba and the National Ballet of Canada. He has completed Cecchetti certification (intermediate level), certification for Gyrotonic® and Gyrokinesis®, and certification for Burdenko water therapy.

World premieres of Bel Canto Chicago Lyric Opera, Dolores Claiborne San Francisco Opera, Champion, An American Soldier, Shalimar, 27 and The Golden Ticket Opera Theatre Saint Louis, Enemies a Love Story Palm Beach Opera. For screen: feature film Camp Wedding (Nevermore audience Award, Jim Thorpe Best Comedy), short films: Bowes Academy, Spell Claire, Get the F Outta Paris!, Death by Omelette (SNCF Prix Du Polar Finalist) and webseries Do it Yourselfie (Friar’s Club special Jury Award, iTVfest Best Director award), co-directed with Amanda DeSimone. He's also served as video director for the 2008-11 NEA Opera Honors, the 2011, 2013 NEA Jazz Masters and created behind-scenes documentaries for Julie Taymor’s The Tempest, Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark and numerous productions at Opera Theatre St. Louis and New York City Opera. MINORApocalypse.com
CREATIVE TEAM

TIMOTHY STEELE
(Rehearsal Pianist)

Timothy Steele is an active vocal coach, collaborative pianist, and conductor, and has taught for twenty-nine years on the opera faculty at New England Conservatory. He has conducted for outreach tours with the Boston Lyric Opera and is a former music director for Opera Providence. He has served as assistant conductor/pianist for over 190 productions with twenty-five opera companies, including Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Wolf Trap Opera, Central City Opera, and Opera Maine. He assisted with the Pulitzer Prize winning opera MADAME WHITE SNAKE for productions in Boston and Taiwan and the OUROBOROS TRILOGY in 2016, and for three years collaborated with WaterFire-Providence on a unique and popular series of opera evenings. For the last eight years he has been music director at First Parish of Milton-UU and producer of Milton Community Concerts. In Boston he has performed with Emmanuel Music, the Handel and Haydn Society, and the Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, among others.

LEONA CHEUNG
(Rehearsal Pianist)

Hailed as "artistically mature, well thought-out presentations" (Definitely the Opera), Leona Cheung is a Boston-based collaborative pianist. An expert in the vocal repertoire from art songs to opera, she is especially known for her musical leadership and responsiveness while collaborating with singers and conductors. Leona accompanies ensembles such as the Handel and Haydn Society and the Boston Children’s Chorus; she also serves as a staff pianist with the New England Conservatory and Boston Conservatory. Leona’s deep devotion to Art Song repertoire has brought her to perform extensively in many international festivals, including Toronto Summer Music Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, Oxford Lieder Festival, Franz Schubert Institute, and Songfest. In summer 2022, she worked closely with the Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble Seraphic Fire led by Patrick Dupré Quigley and James Bass at the Aspen Music Festival. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Leona earned her Master of Music and Graduate Diploma in Collaborative Piano from New England Conservatory, and a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance from Hong Kong Baptist University. (www.leonacheung.com)
TECHNOLOGISTS

CURVIN HUBER
(Director of Innovation)

Curvin Huber holds an MFA in illustration, an MS in interactive technology, and a BA in sculpture. He is currently a Design Professor at Lesley Art + Design where he specializes in lighting, shading, and rendering. Curvin is currently conducting research into the usage of real-time gaming technologies for live performance productions. Additionally, Curvin has been active as a design consultant and researcher working on simulation projects for numerous federal government agencies such as the Center for Disease Control, the Department of Defense, and the National Security Agency as well as visualization projects for marketing agencies and manufacturing companies.

RUSSELL NICKERSON
(Robot Wrangler)

Consulting in the robotics space as Collabots, Russell has worked with Cirque Du Soleil, Fan Expo (ComicCon) and countless events. With over 10 years in the robotics industry he has been behind the stage curtain at many high profile events such as America’s Got Talent and the NEVYs. Prior, Russell had worked for Softbank Robotics who made humanoid robots Pepper and NAO. Currently Russell’s day job is at MassRobotics where he assists robotics startups, large corporate companies, investors, academics and policymakers to bring robots to life. Russell continues to imagine, build and repair new robots and their applications moonlighting as Collabots. When Cerise reached out to bring a robot into Cosmic Cowboy, there was no one better skilled than “Robo Russ”.

KEO HENG
(CGI/VR)

Keo is a Technical Animator and Game Developer with over 17 years of experience. His experience includes Superseed Studio, Turbine Inc., Sony Bend Studio, and other freelance projects. In addition to Keo’s professional experience, he has taught at Becker College, UMass Amherst, and Mount Ida College. He was awarded a highly sought out Epic Megagrant from Epic Games for his development of a Virtual Production Curriculum at Becker College. He was also VP of Video Production at TheBeamer LLC with their work on a $1.1 million National Science Foundation (NSF) and Connecticut Innovations, Inc. (CII) grant for a series called “The Stardust Mystery.” Keo holds a BA from Quinnipiac University in Interactive Digital Design and an MFA in Interactive Design and Game Development from Savannah College of Art and Design.

DONALD CARLING
(VR Artist)

Donald is a VFX Artist that has worked on special effects for various gaming studios and has been in the Game Industry for 5 years. He loves to explore new concepts and techniques as there is always something new to learn when it comes to creating game assets. On Cosmic Cowboy, he is providing his skillset with VFX, Unity, and video production to aid in the creation of VR of the segments show. In his free-time, he enjoys playing games, and also loves to cook for his friends and family.

XIAO SHI
(Technical Assistant)

Xiao Shi is a software engineer, researcher, and freelance tenor based in Boston. After obtaining a B.S. in computer science from Yale in 2015, Xiao spent the past 6.5 years at Facebook (presently known as Meta) working on distributed systems consistency, consensus, and transactions. His research has appeared in top-tier systems conferences (e.g., OSDI, SOSP, and VLDB) as well as the Voice Foundation Symposium. A classically-trained tenor, Xiao is particularly passionate about the oratorio and contemporary art song repertoire. He was a national semifinalist and the New England region winner at NATS (2022). In addition to consulting on research and teaching voice, Xiao enjoys spending his time playing with his friends’ dogs. (www.shixiao.org)
PAOLA ALMONTE
(Animator)

Paola Almonte holds a Bachelor's degree from Lesley University, and she is aiming to become a Professional 3D Computer Animator/Generalist by learning on the job skills and internships she has acquired the past years. She uses many programs like Maya, Nuke, Unreal Engine, MotionBuilder, etc. She has worked on “A Survivor’s Odyssey: The Journey of Penelope and Circe” animating the singing pigs, did an internship as a 3D Animation mentor for the summer, and made an animation called “Blossom” for Art on the Marquee from Boston CyberArts from Boston Convention Center, Massachusetts, to name a few past experiences. She is currently working remotely, doing small gigs and internships to build up the Animation portfolio. In her free time she is learning to code. www.paolaanimator.com/

MARY JANE BEGIN
(Concept Art & Fabrication)

Mary Jane Begin is an award-winning children’s book author and illustrator. In addition to her role as Adjunct Professor at Rhode Island School of Design, she is also the Chair of Illustration in the M.F.A for Children’s Literature at Hollins University. Mary Jane lectures, creates workshops and exhibits her artwork around the globe and teaches online courses for LinkedInLearning.com and CreativeLive.com. She has received awards from the Society of Illustrators, Communications Arts, the Irma Simonton Black Award, and the Critici Erba Prize at the Bologna Book Fair. She won the prestigious Bing Xin Children’s Literature Award for her picture book, Willow Buds, The Tale of Toad and Badger. Her latest book, Ping Meets Pang, debuted on July 6th, 2021. Her artwork has been exhibited in one-woman shows at Books of Wonder Gallery in New York and Beverly Hills, at the National Museum of American Illustration in Newport, and her latest solo exhibitions were at the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum at Hollins University and the Design Society in Shenzhen, China. Her work can be found at www.maryjanebegin.com
HANNAH HULING  
(Production Manager)

Hannah Huling is thrilled to be working with White Snake Projects! Hannah earned her BFA in Technical Theatre and Design in 2011 from Wichita State University. Originally from Franklin, MA, she traveled all over the US, making theatre as a Stage Manager, Technician and Production Manager. When she is not at WSP, she works at Frost Productions, Boston as the Operations Manager. In her precious free time, she enjoys camping and pampering all her fur children.

CHARLES WAITE CLAY  
(Stage Manager)

Charles has traveled far and wide to pursue his passion for technical theater. After studying both Stage Management and Technical Theater at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, in London UK, Charles returned to Boston where he has stage managed several productions for North Shore Community College, as well as Hamlet (Apollinaire Theater Company), Little Women: The Musical, Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde (The Longwood Players), Into the Woods (North End Music and Performing Arts Center) and much more. In his spare time he is a History major at Harvard College. On a personal note, he dedicates his theater career to his late grandfather. Charles cannot thank the cast nor Cerise, Sam, and Tian enough for a truly wonderful rehearsal process and wishes them many broken legs.

JEFFREY PETERSEN  
(Technical Director)

Jeffrey Petersen is thrilled to be making his White Snake Projects debut with Cosmic Cowboy. Jeffrey is a Minnesota transplant with a fading accent. He has worked throughout New England for professional institutions including: Commonwealth Shakespeare Co., Huntington Theatre, SpeakEasy Stage Co. Boston Playwrights’ Theatre, New Repertory Theatre, Odyssey Opera, Boston Midsummer Opera, Opera Hub, Greater Boston Stage, Gloucester Stage, Boston University, Northeastern University, and Emerson College. He holds an MFA in Scenic Design from BU’s School of Theatre and is a proud member of the United Scenic Artists Local 829. www.jeffreypetersendesign.com

RENEE YANCHEY  
(Production Stage Manager)

Renee Yancey is a stage manager, production manager, and theatre educator. Originally from Texas, Renee spent 10 years based in the Washington, D.C., area collaborating on projects with Olney Theatre Center, Studio Theatre, theatre Washington/Helen Hayes Awards, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Velocity DC, and AFI Silver Spring. Currently based in Boston, New England-area work includes collaborations with New Repertory Theatre, Boston Playwrights’ Theatre, Central Square Theater, Wheelock Family Theatre, Opera House Arts, and Commonwealth Shakespeare Company. Most recently Renee was the ASM for the 2022 National Playwrights Conference at The O’Neill. Renee is Head of Management for the School of Theatre at Boston University. MFA Boston University; BFA Texas State University. renee-e-yancey.com

LYNDSEY HAWKES  
(Assistant Stage Manager)

Lyndsey is a Freelance Theatre Professional in the Central MA area. She received a B.A. (Theatre Arts) from Clark University in 2019. Recent credits include Julius Caesar (Ensemble, THT Rep), A Christmas Carol (Child Wrangler, THT Rep) The Fantasticks (Assistant Director, Studio Theatre Worcester), and Seussical the Musical Jr. (Director, Luther-Burbank Middle School Drama). In her free time, she works in retail, takes voice lessons, and enjoys hiking and sightseeing. She is thrilled to be working with White Snake Projects for the first time, and thanks her parents and partner, Aaron, for their unwavering support of her artistic endeavors.
PRODUCTION STAFF

HANNAH HAULING ........................................ Production Manager
JEFFREY PETERSEN .................................... Technical Director
RENEE YANCEY ........................................ Production Stage Manager
CHARLES WAITE CLAY ................................ Production Stage Manager
LYNDSEY HAWKES ..................................... Assistant Stage Manager
BECKY MARSH .......................................... Master electrician
LAURA GENERELLI ..................................... Hair & Makeup Artist
ZOÉ SUNDRA ........................................... Wardrobe Supervisor
RYAN AYRES ........................................... Copysit
LINDSAY CONRAD .................................... Supertitles Designer
GLYNIS ANDERSON ................................... Key art
TALIA ELISA ............................................. Board Op
SAMUEL POLLACK .................................... Production Assistant
ANDIE DUDZIAK ....................................... Properties Master
LINDSAY HOISINGTON ................................ Dresser
L UISA EARLE ........................................... Dresser
MARC WEAVER ........................................ A2
KATHY WITTMAN ...................................... Photography /Videography
JOSHUA GUPTEL ........................................ Video Producer

3D MODELING & ANIMATION TEAM

MATT STRATOTI .......................................... VFX Artist & Tech Artist
KSENIA NOVIKOVA .................................... 3D Modeler
PAOLA ALMONTE ...................................... Character Animator
EDUARDO BERGANZA ................................ Tech Artist
NOELLE DUFFY .......................................... Character Animator
LUCAS FANJOY .......................................... Storyboard Artist
ALEXA FEBLES RODRIGUEZ ......................... 3D Modeler
SIA HALLIE ................................................ Digital Sound Artist
TYLER HIGGINS ........................................ Storyboard Artist
MAKANA WRIGHTINGTON ......................... Character Animator
SIANA DIGREGORIO .................................. Character Animator
MENGLIU LU ............................................ 3D Modeler & Character Animator
WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS’
FREE TICKET PROGRAM

ANYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GO TO THE OPERA

Anyone who wants to go to the opera should be able to. TAP, White Snake Projects’ Ticket Access Program, is central to our vision of social activism and inclusion. It is an imperative for us as we create opera of the 21st century for all audiences.

In the past, we have held one third of the ticket inventory to be given away through TAP to underserved communities and anyone who needed a guest ticket. In Cosmic Cowboy, however, we are experimenting with a new way of leveling the playing field for those who cannot afford to pay top tier prices to get the best seats. PICK YOUR PRICE enables audience members from all socio-economic levels to access the best seats in the house. Our tickets range from $0-$180 for ANY seat. We rely on your goodwill to pay what you can and to respect the work it took to create this beautiful show. So, if you’re able to pay our top price, please do so. If you’re unable to afford a paid ticket at this time, please come as our guest. And for everyone else, please pay whatever is comfortable for you. We are grateful to you all!

LEARN MORE AT
www.whitesnakeprojects.org/our-story/ticket-access-program/

COSMIC COWBOY Rehearsals

Photo credit: Charles Calotta
SPECIAL THANKS TO...

A BIG SHOUT OUT
TO OUR INTREPID VOLUNTEERS WHO BUILT
1,500 GOOGLE CARDBOARD BOXES YOU’RE USING. YAY!

Ivete Souza & Irene Da Silva
(93 years old, and another YAY!)

Nic Laschever & Alexis Peart
Liesl & Bennett Christie

OUR PATRONS AND FRIENDS

Herb & Maura Alexander
Joel & Pam Aronson
Catriona Baker & Curvin Huber
Darcey & Chris Bartel
Mary Jane Begin
Jim Berriman
Carol Bramson
Oliver Caplan
David Chavolla
Mark Correia
Daniel Dain
Margaret Eagle
Joshua England
Geoffrey Epstein & Kitty Weldon
Pirate & Jennifer Epstein
Carmen Grinkis
Peter Herman & Laura Strohecker
Pauline Ho Bynum
Kevin Hodson
Andres Holder
David Howse
Cynthia & John Hughes
Jennifer Hughes
Toni Jackson
Collin Knight
Belinda Lim
Carla McCall
Amyas McKnight
Sue McQuay & Michael Ruberto
Patrick Ng
Nyacko Pearl Perry
Ellen Poss
Dan Seaman
Dawn Meredith Simmons
Ivete & Max Souza
Jan Steenbrugge
Corinne & Simon Stuart
Ann Terrell
Scott & Kristen Utzinger
Sharon Weinstein
Richard Wheelock
Kim Whitener
Janet & Ron Zwanziger

Boston Childrens Chorus team:
Elena Efthimiou
Kenneth Griffith
Patrick Hanafin
Kripa Joseph
SPECIAL THANKS TO...

OUR TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

CATRIONA BAKER  
Chair of Animation

CURVIN HUBER  
Associate Professor

PAUL COTNOIR  
Dean

ILIR MBORJA  
Associate Professor

TERRASA ULM  
Director of UG Program

MICHAEL SWARTZ  
Assistant Professor

MURAT BÜDÜN  
Software Architect

ESRA KILIÇAL  
Project Manager

FERHAT MACAK  
Developer

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Boston Children’s Chorus  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center  
Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Advancement

Boston International Newcomers Academy  
Pao Arts Center

The Immigrant Learning Center  
& other arts, culture, and advocacy organizations in Greater Boston

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Cooper, the dancing robot, provided by Universal Robotics

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Mystic Scenic Studios, Inc (scenic)

VENDOR CREDITS

Cooper, the dancing robot, provided by Universal Robotics

4Wall Entertainment (lighting & projection equipment)

Mystic Scenic Studios, Inc (scenic)
ABOUT WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS

White Snake Projects is an activist opera company founded and led by an immigrant woman of color. We integrate social activism with original opera of the highest production values, partnering with other activists to cross-promote important social issues and opera, and redefining how opera is made by involving young people from our community. Inspired by the legendary White Snake demon who becomes human to experience the intense and transformational power of human life, we’re investing in American composers adept at telling the myth-based stories that live in our collective imaginations through music. We believe in making art accessible to all and commit one-third of all seats to underserved communities.
Learn more at whitesnakeprojects.org

OUR STAFF

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
CERISE LIM JACOBS

GENERAL MANAGER
NIHAN YESIL

ARTS ADMINISTRATOR
STEPHEN JACKSON

COMMUNITY CURATOR
AMYAS MCKNIGHT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT
COLLIN KNIGHT

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS
JEFF LEVENSON
TAMMY LYNCH

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21C MEDIA GROUP:
GLENN PETRY
NOEL STEIER

DIGITAL SERVICES
21C MEDIA GROUP:
AMANDA MACBLANE
MICHELE YANG-STEVENS
ANALISE BOESE

OUR BOARD

CHARLES JACOBS*
Co-Founder & Chair Emeritus

*In Memorium

DARCEY BARTEL
CAROL BRAMSON
PAULINE HO BYNUM
DANIEL P. DAIN (Chair)
DAVID HOWSE
CERISE LIM JACOBS (Clerk)
COLLIN KNIGHT
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Side by Side is pleased to support Cerise and White Snake Productions in its innovative efforts to keep the arts alive and for its creative story telling through Cosmic Cowboy.

At Side by Side we believe that each day with our pet is amazing and that whole food nutrition helps support a happier, healthier, longer life. Visit us at sidebysidepet.com & we’ll help you select the right nutrition plan for your pet.

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IMA is proud to support White Snake Projects and Cosmic Cowboy

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Alice in the Pandemic takes a deep dive down the rabbit hole into the elasticity of time, the unmooring of life, the heroism of doing one’s job, and the reconciliation of mother and daughter. The production uses newly developed technology which enables singers at remote locations to sing synchronously together as they interact with each other and their 3D avatars who lip sync in real time to live performance.

“A remarkable new environment for operatic experimentation”
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“A stellar libretto, polished performances, and a cohesive, engaging visual world... this should not be ignored.”
BROADWAY WORLD
A LOOK BACK AT OUR OPERAS

GILGAMESH

REV. 23

MADAME WHITE SNAKE

DREAMER

PERMADEATH
WHITE SNAKE PROJECTS
2022-2023 SEASON

COSMIC COWBOY

LET’S CELEBRATE

LET'S CELEBRATE!

FRACTURED MOSAICS

COSÌ! MEN ARE LIKE THAT