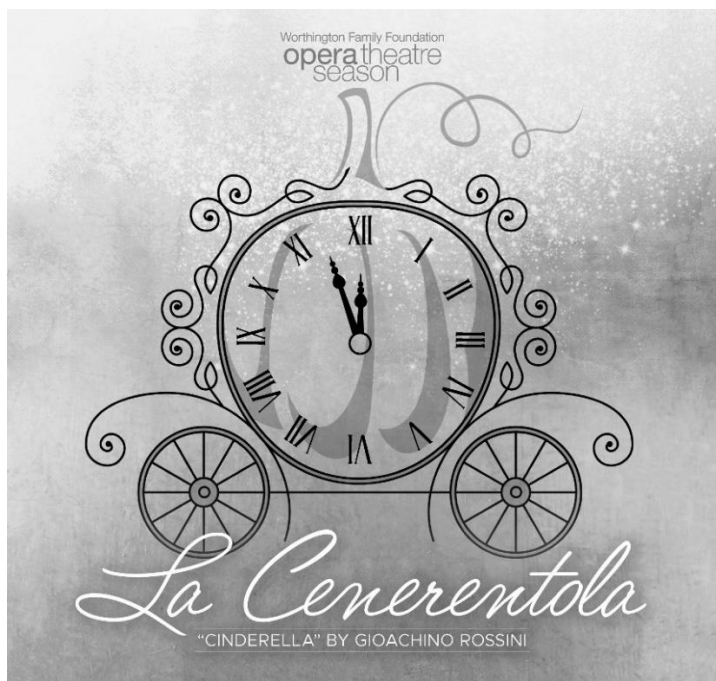




College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Worthington Family Foundation Opera Theatre Season
MSU OPERA THEATRE



Music by Gioachino Rossini
Libretto by Jacopo Ferretti

Melanie Helton, stage director
Katherine Kilburn, conductor
Zongheng Zhang, assistant conductor

*Generously sponsored by
Eleanor H. and Harold E. Leichenko Opera Endowment
established by Lauren Julius Harris*

Wednesday, March 26, 7:00 p.m.
Friday, March 28, 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, March 29, 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 30, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
Fairchild Theatre, MSU Auditorium

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

There are probably more adaptations of the Cinderella story in literature, theatre, and music theatre works than any other fairy tale. From Rodgers and Hammerstein to contemporary film versions starring such actresses as Drew Barrymore, Lily James, and Anne Hathaway, the story continues to be told. Even operatically, you have versions by both Rossini, Pauline Viardot, and Alma Deutscher as well as the ballet by Prokofiev.

The story's origins are believed to have surfaced in ancient Greece in a tale of a Greek slave girl who marries the King of Egypt after her sandal is dropped by an eagle in his lap. He then has a wide search to find the owner of the fascinating sandal. There are even literary versions of the story from China, Korea, and Vietnam.

Rossini took the story from the French author Charles Perrault (probably the most well-known version). He slightly changed some details: instead of a glass slipper, Cinderella leaves the Prince a bracelet. And instead of a wicked stepmother, there is a bumbling and obnoxious stepfather. But, of course, there is a happy ending!

Rossini's operas are among the most produced even today. *La Cenerentola* requires virtuosic singing of both lyrical and flexible techniques as well as excellent Italian. There are many options for singer embellishment, such as ornaments (mostly melodic) and variation (where the melody is the base but is highly altered). We were again very lucky to have the services of New York coach and Italian expert Rachelle Jonck. The recitatives (sung dialogue) are extremely difficult, as performance practice is all about the text and not the music. All the singers worked extremely hard to make their Italian natural and idiomatic in inflection.

Join us next season for Ricky Ian Gordon's towering *The Grapes of Wrath* and a double bill of Italian comedies – Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Rossini's *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

In order of appearance

	<u>March 26 & 29</u>	<u>March 28 & 30</u>
Angelina, known as Cenerentola	Xiao Xiao	Paula Duva-Rodriguez
Clorinda, her stepsister	Elia Meekhoff	Yingxi Lei
Tisbe, her other stepsister	Huizhong Jiang	Meagan Wozny
Don Magnifico, their Impoverished father	Jamie Eagle	Jiahao Fu
Ramiro, Prince Charming	Xiaojie Ji	Cole Harvey
Dandini, his servant Masquerading as Prince	Yilin Chen	Pengyu Yang
Alidoro, tutor to Ramiro	Gabriel Lockheimer Toso	Gabriel Lockheimer Toso

Chorus: Ethan Staver, Alekzander Lipar, Ryan Jordan, Skyler Shasteen, Andrew Burns, Calvin Auperlee, Eric Bach, Tru Neely, Joey Baunoch, Nick Perkins, Jaxon Egge, Chauncey Burghart.

Cover: Michael Seara, Ramiro, Prince Charming

*The Friday evening performance will be conducted by
Zongheng Zhang, assistant conductor*

STAFF FOR MSU OPERA THEATRE

Music Director	Katherine Kilburn
Producer	Melanie Helton
Set Design	Thalia Lara
Set Construction/Technical Director	D.J. Selmayer
Lighting Design	Brent Wrobel*
Costume Designer	Wardrobe Wizardry, Glenn Breed*
Wig and Makeup Design	Martha Ruskai*
Guest Coach/Italian specialist	Rachelle Jonck*
Production Stage Manager	Madi LaJoice
Assistant Stage Manager	Amaya Morren
Assistant to Melanie Helton	Paula Duva Rodriguez
Musical Preparation	Elden Little, Rachelle Jonck*
Assistant Conductor/Chorus Master	Zongheng Zhang
Costume Assistant	BreAnne Turner
Rehearsal Accompanist	Mira Choi, Jiayin Zhang
Fairchild Theatre Operations Manager	Nick Raffaele
Fairchild Theatre Stage Manager	James Peters
Recording Services	Jennifer Shangraw
Publicity, MSU College of Music	Michael Sundermann, Rick Seguin
Budget Officer	Andrea Worful
Financial Officer for MSU Opera Theatre	Renee Graff

*Guest Artist

Grateful Acknowledgments

James Forger, Dean, College of Music

MSU Vocal Arts Area Faculty:

Jane Bunnell, Marc Embree, Derrick Fox, Richard Fracker (chair),

Melanie Helton, Harlan Jennings, Elden Little, Anne Nispel,

Jonathan Reed, Mark Rucker, Sadie Rucker, Sandra Snow;

Deborah Moriarty, Chair, Piano Area; Zhihua Tang, Collaborative

Piano

MSU Department of Theatre

Ann-Marie Lindley, Director of Development, College of Music;

College of Music Staff: Lynne Funk, Katie Bethel, Shawn Mahorney,

Amy Rivard, Tom March, Renee Graff, Lisa Wilton

MSU Opera Theatre is proud that our 2023 production of Verdi's *Falstaff* won the American Prize for University Opera Production. *Don Giovanni* won 3rd prize in the National Opera Association Competition Division VII, and *A Little Night Music* won second prize in Division IV.

SYNOPSIS

Act I – The two daughters of Don Magnifico, Clorinda and Tisbe, are preening at their vanities. Their stepsister, Angelina, also known as Cenerentola (“little ash girl”) is sweeping and looking after them. A vagrant knocks at their door asking for help. As Clorinda and Tisbe mock him, Cenerentola offers him bread and coffee. Unbeknownst to them all, he is actually Alidoro, the tutor and mentor to Prince Ramiro. A group of courtiers from the Prince’s palace enter and announce that there will be a ball and that the Prince will choose a bride there. The girls go crazy as Cenerentola tries to keep a brave face. The girls wake their father, Don Magnifico, with their loud chatter. He scolds them as he tells them of his dream. He dreamt that there was a giant donkey that flew around town and landed on a bell tower. He interprets that as meaning that he was the “ass” and that the girls will give him lots and lots of rich babies. They then tell him that the Prince is choosing a bride. He is flabbergasted but says his dream is coming true, that they must quickly get ready.

Prince Ramiro enters the house, disguised as a simple servant. Alidoro has sent him here, saying that this is where he will find his bride among the daughters of Magnifico. Cenerentola enters and he startles her into dropping her tray. They look in each other’s eyes and fall instantly in love. He asks her who she is and she stammers that she is not sure. He is charmed at her goodness and sincerity. She runs off and Ramiro is confused. The courtiers reenter and introduce Dandini, the Prince’s actual servant who is masquerading as his employer. Dandini is introduced to the daughters, who immediately fawn all over him. In an aside, Dandini explains that the comedy is just beginning. The courtiers escort the girls to the carriage which will take them to the palace. Dandini and Ramiro are just about to leave when Cenerentola begs her stepfather to allow her to go to the ball, even if for an hour. He laughs and derides her as Ramiro and Dandini try to figure out what is going on. Alidoro enters with a scroll proclaiming that there are three daughters of Magnifico. Magnifico claims that she is dead to her chagrin. She is refused permission as all except her leave for the palace.

Alidoro stays behind and explains to Cenerentola that her life is about to change – that her sad face will turn to a smile. He explains that she will be transformed after this night. He gives her two bracelets and shows her (by magic!) the dress that she will wear. They go off together to the palace.

The Magnifico family has arrived at the palace. The sisters immediately begin fighting over Dandini, telling him that they are

better for him than the other sister. They exit and we find Magnifico in the wine cellar with the courtiers. Dandini (“the prince”) has made him Master of the Wine Cellar and he proves it by outdrinking the courtiers. He makes a proclamation that all wine must be saved the appropriate number of days and not watered down.

We next find Ramiro and Dandini trying to outrun the girls. Ramiro is asking which girl might be right for him and Dandini says they are both awful. Ramiro is confused because Alidoro told him it would be a daughter to Don Magnifico. The girls appear and find the two men. Dandini explains that he cannot marry both of them and that the rejected sister will instead marry Ramiro. They are horrified at the thought of marrying a mere servant and argue. From offstage, the courtiers are heard announcing the arrival of a strange woman. All wonder who can it be. The strange woman (Cenerentola in a veil) arrives and announces herself. When Dandini takes off her veil, all are astonished. The girls cannot believe it could possibly be Cenerentola. Magnifico arrives from the wine cellar to announce dinner and is stupefied to see what looks like his stepdaughter. All sit down to dinner and are extremely confused.

Act II – Cenerentola is trying to escape from the palace when Ramiro and Dandini waylay her. She tells Dandini that she is in love with his “servant” and that Ramiro will find her by matching the bracelet that she gives him. She runs off, leaving Ramiro to wonder at her goodness and beauty. He swears to go everywhere until he finds the owner of the matching bracelet. He and the courtiers go in search of the missing beauty. Magnifico runs into Dandini, who finally confesses to the old man that he is not the Prince but instead his servant. Magnifico is astonished but quickly becomes furious. He stomps off to home. In the meantime, Dandini catches up to Ramiro and the courtiers in search of the missing young woman. A terrible storm catches them as they ask all and sundry if they have seen this bracelet. They finally arrive at Magnifico’s house and Ramiro reveals himself as the actual Prince. He declares that he loves Cenerentola and will make her his bride. The Magnifico family laugh and deride even the possibility and the Prince erupts with anger. Ramiro leaves with his bride-to-be. Clorinda is left behind feeling lost and abandoned. She bemoans her fate but then cheers up, saying that she is still young and pretty and can get any man she wants.

Back at the palace, it is the wedding day for Cenerentola and Ramiro. Her family has been brought there and are suitably depressed and hardly apologetic. Cenerentola begs Ramiro to forgive them, saying that, ultimately, goodness and honesty have won the day. The curtain falls on the happy couple.

MSU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Katherine Kilburn, conductor

Zongheng Zhang, assistant conductor

Violin I

Natasha Kubit

Endi Chen

Arianna Argentieri

Runqi Wong

Jungmin Lee

Violin II

Leonid Tsoy

Yulin Zhou

Selin Samsar

Sarah Munson

Hsin-Jen Yang

Viola

Jiajing Fang

Meagan Turner

Xinye Xu

Mengyuan Song

Cello

Tung-An Chien

Aaron Longuski

Yi-Chen Ke

Yu-Chen Lin

Bass

Albert Daschle

Bochi Zhang

Flute

Alex Coble

Oboe

Geoffrey Madge

Clarinet

Alicia Gutierrez

Sunil Kim

Bassoon

Erika Clippinger

Horn

Reed Fitzpatrick

Zach Zuber

Trumpet

Michael Minenna

Trombone

Maxwell Kowal

Rehearsal Pianists

Mira Choi

Jaiyin Zhang

Harpsichord

Dr. Elden Little

Percussion

Klaire Thomas

Chorus Master

Zongheng Zhang

MSU Opera Society Donors

2024-2025 Season

MSU Opera Society is the community support organization of the MSU Opera Theatre. With grateful appreciation, we acknowledge the following members of the MSU Opera Society at Michigan State University beginning July 1, 2024. We are grateful to our members for their generous contributions.

The 2024-25 MSU Opera Theatre season is generously funded by the Worthington Family Foundation.

Presenter (\$5,000+)

James and Susan Bonfiglio

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Eleanor H. and Harold E. Leichenko Opera Endowment established by
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Diane Levy
Janice Levy
Elden Little
Joseph Matrella
Gordon Miracle
Katherine O'Neill
Robert Parks and Karen Jurgensen
Karen Petersmarck
Richard Peterson and Carolyn Loeb
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Heidi McNaughton
Jane Wilensky

MSU Opera Society Donors

Become a member of the MSU Opera Society! Your contribution is tax deductible and will be used to assist with high production costs involving set design and construction, costumes, and operations.

Please consider how much you enjoy the Opera Theatre productions and send your check or money order made payable to Michigan State University with "MSU Opera Society - AE0605" written on the memo line. Mail your contributions to:

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Opera Theatre

College of Music Advancement Office
333 W Circle Drive, Room 105
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824



For information about the MSU Opera Society, please contact the College of Music Advancement Office at (517) 353-9872 or e-mail Ann-Marie Lindley at alindley@msu.edu.

STUDENT NEWS

Cole Harvey (DMA, student of Richard Fracker) will be a studio artist at Wolf Trap Opera this summer and was a Festival Artist with the Seagle Festival. **Yingxi Lei** (DMA, student of Melanie Helton) will sing the roles of Oberto in *Alcina* and Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Chicago Summer Opera. **Xiaojie Ji** (DMA, student of Richard Fracker) won the North Carolina District of the MET Laffont Competition. **Pengyu Yang** (DMA, student of Marc Embree) won an Encouragement Award in the Michigan District of the MET Laffont Competition. **James Eagle** (MM, student of Richard Fracker) won the Elizabeth Garner Competition, Michigan Federation of Music Clubs (18-22 year old division.) **Ruoxi Bian** (DMA, student of Jane Bunnell) Idaho District of the MET Laffont Competition. **Anna Hallwood** (MM, student of Mark Rucker), **Jiahao Fu** (DMA, student of Mark Rucker), **Gabriel Lockheimer Toso** (MM, student of Mark Rucker), **Cole Harvey** (DMA, student of Richard Fracker), **Xiao Xiao** (DMA, student of Richard Fracker) and **Phoenix Miranda** (MM, student of Mark Rucker) were District Finalists. **Xiao Xiao** (DMA, student of Richard Fracker) was an apprentice artist with Glimmerglass Opera. **Paige Heidrich** (DMA2025) is a finalist for the Harold Haugh Competition and won the MSU Dissertation Completion Grant. **Jiahao Fu** (DMA, student of Mark Rucker) sang roles in *Giulio Cesare* and *Hansel and Gretel* with Chicago Summer Opera. **Michael Seare** (MM, student of Mark Rucker) sang the Berlioz *Nuits d'ete* with Rexburg Community Concerts in Idaho. **Jose-Luis Maldonado** (DMA, student of Mark Rucker) sang Escamillo in *Carmencita* at Lincoln Center and sang the title role in *Falstaff* and the Father in *Hansel and Gretel* with Lyric Opera of Orange County. **Yilin Chen** (DMA, student of Richard Fracker) won a MET Encouragement Award (Indiana District) and was awarded a full scholarship to the Collaborative Piano Summer Institute Vocal Academy in New York City. **Paula Duva-Rodriguez**, Mezzo-soprano Award - George Shirley Competition, Fengzhen Liu - Bradamante- Alcina - Chicago Summer Opera.

ALUMNI NEWS

Katherine DeYoung (BM 2016, student of Melanie Helton) covered roles in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Metropolitan Opera. **Brian Major** (DMA, 2018, student of Mark Rucker) sang a role in *Moby Dick* at the Metropolitan Opera. He sang the title role in *Nabucco* with Teatro Municipal de Sao Paulo and Amonasro in *Aida* with Boston Lyric and Opera Maine. **Zaikuan Song** (DM 2020, student of Richard Fracker) performed leading and supporting bass roles with Opera Delaware, Houston Grand Opera, and Opera Orlando and performed as bass soloist with the National Philharmonic and Fairbanks Symphony. **Shannon Crowley** (BM2020, student of Mark Rucker) is an apprentice artist with Pittsburgh Opera where she sang Zelmira in *Armida*. She was also a District and Regional Winner with the MET Laffont Competition. **Kyle White** (BM2018, student of Marc Embree) will be an apprentice artist with the Santa Fe Opera this summer. He has sung leading roles with such companies as Austin Opera and Madison Opera. MET Laffont Competition. **Nicholas Hudak** (DMA2020, student of Richard Fracker) performed Molody Tsigan in Rachmaninoff's *Aleko*, and Rinuccio in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* with Bel Cantini Opera, FAIRCHILD THEATRE

Washington, D.C. **Ben Reisinger** (MM2020, student of Mark Rucker) is a Lindemann Young Artist at the Metropolitan Opera and won prizes with Opera Index and the Premiere Opera Foundation competitions. **Will Johnson** (BM2020, student of Richard Fracker) apprenticed with the Madison Opera Studio Artist Program (Wisconsin). **Lindsay Kesselman** (BM, 2005, student of Melanie Helton) continues to be one of the leading new music specialists in the United States. **John Riesen** (MM2015, student of Richard Fracker) appeared in numerous opera and oratorio productions and concerts including Pacific Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Portland Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Nashville Opera, Opera Roanoke, and Opera Las Vegas. John has also been nominated as an associate producer for the Grammy-nominated project “The Impossible Dream”. **Gedeane Graham** (DMA, 2024, student of Mark Rucker) sang the Wagner *Wesendonck Lieder* with Chamber Orchestra of the Springs and was a grant recipient from the Olga Forrai Foundation. **Tianchi Zhang** (DMA2023, student of Richard Fracker) has been hired by the Jiangsu Conservatory as an instructor and appeared in several productions throughout China. **Catherine Goode** (MM2017, student of Melanie Helton) is working on her DMA at the University of Michigan on full scholarship. She is represented by Encompass Artists. **Divira Pahwa** (BM2024, student of Richard Fracker) was accepted into the master program in vocal performance at Peabody Conservatory with a very substantial scholarship. **Kevon Thompson** (BM2024, student of Richard Fracker) was awarded a Graduate Assistantship for his Master in Vocal Performance degree at Miami Frost School of Music. **Matthew Scollin** (BM2010, student of Richard Fracker) made numerous solo appearances as a member of the prestigious Singing Sergeants, USAF. **Jenny Ribeiro** (MM2022, student of Marc Embree) is a Visiting Professor of Voice at Albion College and will cover the role of Lady Macbeth in Verdi’s *Macbeth* with Teatro Nuovo this summer. **Liang Zhao** (DMA2023) is an adjunct professor of voice at Hope College. He presented his research at the 25th Annual Western University Symposium on Music and the 2024 Graduate Music Conference at the University of Toronto. **Christine Boddicker**, resident artist, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Lyric Opera of Kansas City; (January 2024 - November 2024) major young artist program. Riley Piazzon, Bradamante-Alcina Chicago Summer Opera, **Michaela Fotis-Larsen** (BM2020, student of Marc Embree) will debut in a leading role with Opera Kansas in a world premiere opera. She is finishing a DMA at University New York Stonybrook and will sing Cherubino with Chautauqua Opera this summer.