



**REGINA  
OPERA  
COMPANY**

**OUR 56TH SEASON 2025-2026**

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**PUCCINI'S**  
*Suor Angelica*

A decorative graphic element located below the title. It features a solid black cross at the bottom, with a cluster of small black dots arranged in a semi-circular pattern above it, resembling a rosary or a decorative flourish.

**& CONCERT**

**Feb. 28, Mar. 1, 7, & 8, 2026, at 3 PM**

**Free open dress rehearsal with piano  
Feb. 21, 2026, at 3 PM**

**Free open dress rehearsal with orchestra  
Feb. 26, 2026, at 7 PM**

## OFFICERS and ARTISTIC STAFF

Francine Garber-Cohen ..... President  
Linda Cantoni ..... Exec. VP/Secretary/Legal Advisor/Assoc. Stage Director  
Joseph Delfausse ..... Treasurer  
Scott Jackson Wiley ..... Music Director

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Producer..... Francine Garber-Cohen  
Conductor ..... Scott Jackson Wiley  
Stage Director .....Helen Van Tine  
Production Design .....Helen Van Tine, Richard W. Evans, Wayne Olsen  
Lighting Design..... Eka Savajol  
Stage Manager..... Thomas Geib  
Assistant Conductor/Choral Conductor..... Emily Lōa-Swain  
Rehearsal Pianists.....Emily Lōa-Swain\*, Violetta Zabbi\*\*  
\*Pianist, *Suor Angelica* at Feb. 21 Open Dress Rehearsal  
\*\*Pianist, Vocal Concert at Feb. 21 Open Dress Rehearsal

Costumes ..... Marcia C. Kresge  
Asst. Stage Manager..... Sam Elliott Siddiqui  
Supertitles Translation/Program/Website..... Linda Cantoni  
Stage Crew..... Thomas Geib, Sam Elliott Siddiqui  
Publicity..... Francine Garber-Cohen  
Set/Publicity Graphic Design ..... Wayne Olsen  
Guild Membership Coordinator .....Julia Cornely  
Volunteer Staff, Box Office, & Mailing List Manager ..... Joe Delfausse  
Volunteers: Jack & Enid Benzera, Susan Carlson, Julia Cornely, Christine Kavar, Thomas Lenihan, Charles Liebov, Glenn Mintz, Charles Monto, Don Paluh, Richard Redmond, Santo Trapani  
Program Printed by..... The Ink Shop

All performances at Our Lady of Perpetual Help C.A.B.,  
5902 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Brooklyn, New York

## REGINA OPERA COMPANY

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**SPECIAL THANKS** to Br. Augustus J. Riviere, Rector, and Rev. Joseph Dionne, Parochial Administrator, OLPH Parish; Ralph Nofi, Ph.D., Chairperson, OLPH Catholic Academy of Brooklyn; Ana Ruth Leon de Santos, OLPH Parish Secretary; Deborah Ross, OLPH Parish Volunteer; Isidro, Raul, and Steven, OLPH Maintenance Staff; Barry Cohen; Peter C. Orlandi, CPA; and The Ink Shop. Orchestra reduction by Bryan Higgins, courtesy of Motet Music Publishing Company.

# Orchestral Concert Program

George Frideric Handel  
Concerto for Harp in B-Flat Major, op. 4, no. 6  
Anna Lien, Harp

Franz Joseph Haydn  
Concerto for Trumpet in E-Flat Major, Hob. VIIe/1  
Nathan McKinstry, Trumpet



## *Suor Angelica Casts*

### **FEB. 21 OPEN PIANO DRESS REHEARSAL**

Sister Angelica: Sara Beth Pearson  
The Princess, her aunt: Erica Koehring  
Abbess: Emily Gehman  
Monitress: Janelle Kirton  
Mistress of the Novices: Elizabeth Moulton  
Sister Genovieffa: Veronica Mak  
Sister Osmina: Sarah Pajonas  
Sister Dolcina: Olivia Capozzi  
Nursing Sister: Hyunju Ha  
First Alms Sister: Melaina Mills  
Second Alms Sister: Yvonne Juris  
Novice: Carolyn Anderson  
First Lay Sister: Emma Ritto  
Second Lay Sister: Laura Ann Heckmann  
Sister Lucille: Manya Gaver-Holmes  
Portress: Rachel Spund

### **FEB. 26 OPEN ORCHESTRA DRESS REHEARSAL**

Sister Angelica: Rachel Hippert  
The Princess, her aunt: Vita Koreneva  
Abbess: Rachel Spund  
Monitress: Michaela Larsen  
Mistress of the Novices: Sarah Ittoop  
Sister Genovieffa: Margaux Frohlich  
Sister Osmina: Renna Popli  
Sister Dolcina: Emily Tate Daniel

Nursing Sister: Luisa Simon  
First Alms Sister: Melissa Perry  
Second Alms Sister: Sea Jeong Jang  
Novice: Cez Anne Cariño  
First Lay Sister: Emma Ritto  
Second Lay Sister: Laura Ann Heckmann  
Sister Lucille: Lina Chung  
Portress: Shanelle Woods

### **FEB. 28 PERFORMANCE**

Sister Angelica: Yeawon Jun  
The Princess, her aunt: Manya Gaver-Holmes  
Abbess: Shanelle Woods  
Monitress: Tomoko Nago  
Mistress of the Novices: Sofia Durante  
Sister Genovieffa: Katherine Thompson  
Sister Osmina: Sarah Pajonas  
Sister Dolcina: Lina Chung  
Nursing Sister: Jessica DeGennaro  
First Alms Sister: Emily Vidler  
Second Alms Sister: Sea Jeong Jang  
Novice: Yvonne Juris  
First Lay Sister: Gabriella Giangreco  
Second Lay Sister: Laura Ann Heckmann  
Sister Lucille: Olivia Capozzi  
Portress: Rachel Spund

### **MAR. 1 PERFORMANCE**

Sister Angelica: Sara Beth Pearson  
The Princess, her aunt: Erica Koehring  
Abbess: Rachel Spund  
Monitress: Janelle Kirton  
Mistress of the Novices: Elizabeth Moulton  
Sister Genovieffa: Veronica Mak  
Sister Osmina: Renna Popli  
Sister Dolcina: Olivia Capozzi  
Nursing Sister: Luisa Simon  
First Alms Sister: Melaina Mills  
Second Alms Sister: Sea Jeong Jang  
Novice: Cez Anne Cariño  
First Lay Sister: Yvonne Juris

Second Lay Sister: Laura Ann Heckmann  
Sister Lucille: Manya Gaver-Holmes  
Portress: Emily Gehman

### **MAR. 7 PERFORMANCE**

Sister Angelica: Rachel Hippert  
The Princess, her aunt: Vita Koreneva  
Abbess: Emily Gehman  
Monitress: Michaela Larsen  
Mistress of the Novices: Sarah Ittoop  
Sister Genovieffa: Margaux Frohlich  
Sister Osmina: Renna Popli  
Sister Dolcina: Emily Tate Daniel  
Nursing Sister: Hyunju Ha  
First Alms Sister: Melissa Perry  
Second Alms Sister: Yvonne Juris  
Novice: Carolyn Anderson  
First Lay Sister: Emma Ritto  
Second Lay Sister: Laura Ann Heckmann  
Sister Lucille: Lina Chung  
Portress: Shanelle Woods

### **MAR. 8 PERFORMANCE**

Sister Angelica: Yeawon Jun  
The Princess, her aunt: Manya Gaver-Holmes  
Abbess: Shanelle Woods  
Monitress: Tomoko Nago  
Mistress of the Novices: Sofia Durante  
Sister Genovieffa: Katherine Thompson  
Sister Osmina: Sarah Pajonas  
Sister Dolcina: Lina Chung  
Nursing Sister: Jessica DeGennaro  
First Alms Sister: Emily Vidler  
Second Alms Sister: Sea Jeong Jang  
Novice: Yvonne Juris  
First Lay Sister: Emma Ritto  
Second Lay Sister: Laura Ann Heckmann  
Sister Lucille: Olivia Capozzi  
Portress: Rachel Spund

## The Story of *Suor Angelica*

Sister Angelica and two lay sisters had been late for chapel at their cloistered convent. Angelica has already done her penance; the Mistress of the Novices now imposes a penance on the lay sisters. The Monitress then chides other nuns for minor transgressions but allows them to rest in the garden. As they enjoy the sunshine, their talk turns to lingering desires for the worldly pleasures they used to enjoy. Angelica denies that she has any desires, but the others know that she longs for news of her family. She has been at the convent for seven years without hearing from them, and the sisters believe that she is a princess who was sent to the convent as a punishment for some mysterious transgression.

A nursing sister rushes in and asks Angelica for a herbal remedy for a wasp-sting. Two alms-collecting nuns arrive with provisions, announcing that a rich-looking carriage is outside the convent gate. Angelica anxiously asks them to describe it. The convent bell rings; Angelica begins to pray. The nuns hope it is a visit from Angelica's family. The Abbess tells Angelica to collect herself because her aunt, the Princess, has come to see her.

The Princess enters and ignores Angelica's gestures of affection. She reminds Angelica that she is the guardian for her and for Angelica's younger sister, Anna, who is to be married. The Princess demands that Angelica sign her inheritance over to Anna, adding that Anna's fiancé is willing to overlook the disgrace Angelica brought on the family. When Angelica accuses her of being hard-hearted, the Princess commands her to atone. Angelica replies that she has atoned by devoting herself to the Virgin Mary, but that she cannot forget her little son. She begs the Princess to tell her how he is. After some hesitation, the Princess replies that he became ill, and that everything was done to try to save him. Angelica, realizing that he is dead, falls to the ground, sobbing. The Princess makes a gesture of compassion but checks herself and prays instead. Angelica signs the document. The Princess leaves.

Angelica grieves that her baby died without his mother to comfort him. She prays to die so she can join him. The nuns find her in a mystical transport of joy. When they leave, she prepares a herbal poison for herself. She bids the convent farewell and drinks the poison, but immediately regrets it, as suicide is a mortal sin. She calls upon the Virgin for salvation. A celestial choir is heard praising the Virgin, who miraculously appears with Angelica's child. The child approaches Angelica, who dies at his feet.

## INTRODUCING . . .

**CAROLYN ANDERSON** (Novice), D.M.A., is a soprano, educator, and producer based in the Hudson Valley. Recent roles include Patience (*Patience* at Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company) and Clorinda (*La Cenerentola* at Taconic Opera's Young Artist Program). Last fall, she was the winner of the Autumn Charleston International Music Competition in her category. Before relocating to New York last summer, she was an instructor at Toledo School for the Arts, Bowling Green State University, and Interlochen Center for the Arts.

**OLIVIA CAPOZZI** (Sister Dolcina/Sister Lucilla) - Originally hailing from Binghamton, New York, soprano Olivia Capozzi is a recent graduate of Manhattan School of Music, equally at home in opera, art song, and contemporary works. Most recently, she was heard as Milica in Ana Sokolovic's *Svadba*, Noémie in *Cendrillon*, Ann Putnam in *The Crucible*, and in scenes from *Die Zauberflöte* and *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*. Olivia is excited to be joining Regina Opera for the first time!

**CEZ ANNE CARIÑO** (Novice) is a Filipino soprano who holds a Bachelor's degree in Voice and a Master's degree in Voice Performance and Pedagogy. Her show credits include *Guys and Dolls* (Sarah Brown), *Der Schauspieldirektor* (Mme. Herz), *Carmen* (Frasquita), and *Turandot* (ensemble). She is a teaching artist at the Verdi Music Academy and the Music Steps Music School in New Jersey. In December 2025, Cez was welcomed as a member of the Filharmonix Choir, a Jersey City-based choral group.

**LINA CHUNG** (Sister Dolcina/Sister Lucilla) is a Korean-American soprano based in New York City and Boston. She holds a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the Mannes School of Music and a Bachelor of Music from the New England Conservatory. Recent operatic highlights include Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Erste Knabe (*Die Zauberflöte*), and Cunegonde (*Candide*). Active on the concert stage, she is a prizewinner of multiple national competitions and will soon debut as Fiordiligi from *Così fan tutte* with Teatro Grattacielo.

**EMILY TATE DANIEL** (Sister Dolcina) - Hailed for her "rich voice with great control," Emily Tate Daniel is excited to make her debut with Regina Opera as Suor Dolcina. Other appearances this season include Nedda in *I Pagliacci* with Greve Opera and Connecticut Virtuosi Opera. Recent highlights include Alice Ford (cover) in *Falstaff* at Opera San José, Tosca (cover) in *Tosca* at Livermore Valley Opera, and Erste Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* at Asheville Lyric Opera. She is an alumna of the San Francisco Conservatory and the Peabody Conservatory.

**JESSICA DeGENNARO** (Nursing Sister) is currently pursuing a Master of Music in Vocal Performance at the Manhattan School of Music, where she studies with Christòphenen Nomura. Most recently, she appeared as Anna Einz in Kurt Weill's *Die Sieben Todsünden*. Additional roles include Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Morgana (*Alcina*), and Miles (*The Turn of the Screw*). With Regina Opera, she appears in *Suor Angelica* as La Sorella Infermiera and soprano in the chorus.

**SOFIA DURANTE** (Mistress of Novices) is an Italian-Canadian mezzo-soprano and a proud graduate of the Mannes School of Music in New York. Though petite in stature, she commands the stage with vocal warmth and agility. Recent career highlights include her portrayal of Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* with Bronx Opera and her participation as a resident artist in the Canadian Opera Company's Summer Intensive. A frequent collaborator with Classic Lyric Arts, Sofia's latest role was La Frugola in *Il Tabarro*.

**RICHARD EVANS** (Production Design) is a retired electronics engineer. He and his wife Lynn sold their home of 40+ years in Connecticut and moved to Brooklyn in 2014 so that they could attend more operas and Off-Broadway shows and enjoy the Brooklyn vibe. Looking for things to do, Richard worked at restoration on the old tanker ship *Mary A. Whalen* in Red Hook for a few years. He then responded to Regina Opera's call for help and joined as a stagehand. He is now the company carpenter and set designer.

**MARGAUX FROHLICH** (Sister Genovieffa) is a Franco-American soprano based in NYC whose repertoire spans Händel, Britten, and contemporary works. She returns to Regina Opera for her role debut as Suor Genovieffa, having previously appeared in the choruses of *La Traviata* and *La Bohème*. Recent highlights include Little Red in *Knightly News* with Delaware Valley Opera and La Fée in Viardot's *Cendrillon*, performed in Italy with Fabbrica, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma's young artist program. She holds degrees from the Peabody Institute and Manhattan School of Music.

**MANYA GAVER-HOLMES** (Princess/Sister Lucilla) is delighted to join Regina Opera for her fourth show (Alisa, Annina). She enjoys performing the Gilbert and Sullivan contralto roles including Little Buttercup at the International G&S Festival in Buxton. Recently, Manya appeared as the Sorceress in a sold-out performance of *Dido and Aeneas* produced by a nascent and still nameless opera company. This spring you can catch her back at Regina Opera as Mercedes in *Carmen* or cross-stitching on the subway. Love to loved ones.

**EMILY GEHMAN** (Abbess/Portress) is a recent graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, having received her Master's degree in Classical Voice. During her time at Manhattan School of Music, Miss Gehman performed as Marcellina in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Armelinde in Pauline Viardot's *Cendrillon*. In 2022, Miss Gehman performed Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* with the Broadway Bach Ensemble. Recent performances include Fricka in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and Mercedes in Bizet's *Carmen*.

**THOMAS GEIB** (Stage Manager) is excited to be a part of another Regina Opera production. Previous opera/opera roles include the Organ Grinder in *Il Tabarro*, Dancaïro in *Carmen*, Vespone in *La Serva Padrona*, Frank in *Die Fledermaus*, Imperial Commissioner/Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*, Customs Sergeant in *La Bohème*, Amelia's Servant in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Bogdanowitsch in *The Merry Widow*, and Fezziwig/Charwoman in *Scrooge & Gilbert & Sullivan*.

**GABRIELLA GIANGRECO** (First Lay Sister) holds a Master of Music from Indiana University and a Bachelor of Music from the Manhattan School of Music. Her operatic roles include the title role in *Lakmé*, Frasquita in *Carmen*, Queen of the Night

in *Die Zauberflöte*, Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. She received a 2022 Metropolitan Opera National Council Encouragement Award and has performed with ensembles including The Dessoff Choirs, Oratorio Society of New York, and the National Children's Chorus.

**HYUNJU HA** (Nursing Sister) is a soprano who holds a Master's degree from the Mannes School of Music. She completed the Konzertexamen at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg. Her repertoire includes works by Puccini, Mozart, and Verdi. Hyunju has appeared in opera productions and concerts in Europe and the United States and continues to pursue a career as a classical singer.

**LAURA ANN HECKMANN** (Second Lay Sister) is excited to be making her role debut with Regina Opera company. She is a two-time vocal winner of the Minuetto Music Festival and made her Carnegie Hall debut as a soloist in November 2018. She has performed for Seymour Barab at Theater for the New City as Kate in his production, *The Blind Date*. Past roles include: The Plaintiff in *Trial by Jury*, Mercury in *Thespis*, Lady Ella in *Patience*, Chloe in *Princess Ida*, Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, and Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, among others.

**RACHEL HIPPERT** (Sister Angelica) has performed with Regina Opera as Mimi in *La Bohème* and Nedda in *I Pagliacci*, and with Amore Opera in productions including: Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*); Fiordiligi (*Così Fan Tutte*); Mimi (Puccini's *La Bohème*); Violetta (*La Traviata*); and Micaëla (*Carmen*). Ms. Hippert has released two albums of original music by Colombian composer Julián De La Chica: *Profanum* (2019) and *Experimentelle und unbestimmte Lieder, Op. 9* (2017), and is CEO of The Opera Collective Inc., bringing accessible opera performances into NYC's subway and beyond in partnership with MTA Music.

**SARAH ITTOOP** (Mistress of Novices) is thrilled to make her Regina Opera debut as Maestra delle Novizie. Previous roles include Frasquita in *Carmen* with Golden Rose Opera, NY, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Tibi Festival in Sansepolcro, Italy. Love to Zo.

**SEA JEONG JANG** (Second Alms Sister), originally from South Korea, completed her Professional Studies Certificate (2025) and Master of Music degree (2023) at the Manhattan School of Music. She has performed roles including Les Chiffres in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, P.T. Barnum in *Katie – The Strongest of the Strong*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and the Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*. She is actively performing in various concerts and recitals.

**YEAWON JUN** (Sister Angelica) is a Korea-born soprano based in New York. Her repertoire includes Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Mimi and Musetta (*La Bohème*), Cunegonde (*Candide*), Nedda (*I Pagliacci*), Leïla (*Les Pêcheurs de Perles*), Liù (*Turandot*), and Cio-Cio-San (*Madama Butterfly*). In the 2026 season, she appears as The Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*), Suor Angelica (*Suor Angelica*) and Micaëla (*Carmen*). She holds degrees from Yonsei University and Mannes, and is pursuing a DMA at Rutgers University.

**YVONNE JURIS** (Second Alms Sister/Novice/First Lay Sister) is a classically trained singer, flautist, and writer. She has performed in various venues in the New

York City area that include Symphony Space, 53 Above, the Huron Club at SoHo Playhouse, and recently competed in Mama's Next Big Act 2025 competition at the historic Don't Tell Mama cabaret. She has been seen in several Regina Opera productions including *La Traviata*, where she was a dancing zingarella. She sends her family much love for their tremendous support.

**JANELLE KIRTON** (Monitress) - Lyric soprano Janelle Kirton's voice seamlessly blends power and grace! Janelle's previous performance credits include La Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Giovanna in *Rigoletto*, and Leonora in *Il Trovatore*. Janelle is also an accomplished violist, conductor, and educator, and her passion for music is matched only by her commitment to nurturing the next generation. Janelle is making her company debut with the Regina Opera Company in the role of La Zelatrice in *Suor Angelica*.

**ERICA KOEHRING** (Princess) - Praised by *BroadwayWorld* for a "velvety mezzo" whose Amneris "held no terrors," mezzo-soprano Erica Koehring revels in the lush complexity of Verdi but also enjoys exploring the lighter side of opera with a little Gilbert & Sullivan. Her favorite roles include Amneris (*Aida*), Azucena (*Il Trovatore*), Carmen, Marcellina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Katisha (*The Mikado*), and Alma/Cecelia March (*Little Women*). A sought-after concert soloist and choral artist throughout the tri-state area, Erica enjoys works by Mozart, Verdi, Handel, Britten, and Vivaldi.

**VITA KORENEVA** (Princess) is an award-winning Russian-American mezzo-soprano, praised as an "emotional heartthrob" for her rich, distinctive voice. She has appeared internationally in opera and concert, with performances at Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, Washington National Cathedral, and the State Capella of St. Petersburg. A laureate of multiple international competitions, Vita is also co-founder of *DictionBuddy* and a composer whose opera *3:16* premiered in 2025.

**MARCIA C. KRESGE** (Costume Design) began as a teen sewing her own clothes and grew to making costumes and headpieces. As a designer, dancer, teacher, and performing artist, she collaborates with directors (and artists) to realize the vision of a time period, the emotions, and the characters, whether played by schoolchildren or by professional singers and dancers. She designed and performed in *The Seagull*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, many classic ballets with American Ballet Russe, the modern-dance Freeman Repertory Dance Company, and the Folk Dance Theatre. She has been with Regina Opera since 2016.

**MICHAELA LARSEN** (Monitress) – Brooklyn-based mezzo Michaela Larsen makes her Regina Opera debut as La Zelatrice in *Suor Angelica*. She is known for her charming and flawlessly sung Cherubino and vivid interpretation of new American opera, and has twice graced the stage of the Metropolitan Opera (Verdi *Requiem*, *Fidelio*). Other roles she will debut this season: Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria Rusticana*), Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), and Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*). More at [michaelalarsen.com](http://michaelalarsen.com).

**ANNA LIEN** (Harp Soloist) is a New York City-based harpist and Bachelor of Music student at NYU Steinhardt. Her playing is rooted in the classical tradition, with a focus on expressive phrasing and refined technique, and she is increasingly interested in blending classical performance with diverse musical genres and communities in the

NYC scene. She has performed with many communities throughout the city, including Regina Opera Company, NYC Master Chorales, NYU Broadway Orchestra, and her own chamber ensemble.

**EMILY LŌA-SWAIN** (Pianist, *Suor Angelica* at Feb. 21 Open Dress Rehearsal/Assistant Conductor) - Equally at home with chamber music, song, and operatic repertoire, Dr. Lōa-Swain has been especially passionate in coaching singers and working on orchestral reduction/realization on piano. Her operatic repertoire includes *Il Trittico*, *La Rondine*, *Armide*, *Rape of Lucretia*, *Così Fan Tutte*, *Rigoletto*, *Tosca*, *I Pagliacci*, and *La Traviata*. Since 2023, she has served as an independent contractor to Stony Brook University Music Department for mostly instrumental recital projects. At Regina Opera, she serves as rehearsal pianist, assistant conductor, choral conductor, and vocal coach.

**VERONICA MAK** (Sister Genovieffa) is a Chinese-American soprano based in New York City. Veronica was previously featured in Regina Opera's productions of *Rigoletto* as Gilda and *The Medium* as Monica. Additional operatic credits include Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Laetitia in *The Old Maid and the Thief*, Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*, Bastienne in *Bastien und Bastienne*, and Pyg in *Knightly News!* Ms. Mak's upcoming season includes Frasquita in *Carmen* with Regina Opera, Spoleto Festival as a Vocal Fellow, and a solo recital with Delaware Valley Opera.

**NATHAN MCKINSTRY** (Trumpet Soloist) - A native of State College, Pennsylvania, Nathan McKinstry joined the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra as Second Trumpet at the beginning of the 2025/2026 season. He studied at the Eastman School of Music, earning a bachelor's degree in Trumpet Performance and in Music Theory; and at the Manhattan School of Music, where he obtained a Masters in Music and a Professional Studies Certificate in Orchestral Trumpet. Prior to joining the Met, Nathan was the Second/Associate Principal Trumpet of the Kansas City Symphony.

**MELAINA MILLS** (First Alms Sister) is a versatile artist dedicated to the craft of storytelling through song. A past district winner of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, she makes her debuts this season with Regina Opera, and Amore Opera, and with the New Music Theatre Project in the world première of Noah Magnus's *The Death of the Mouse*. In the 2024 season, she sang the role of Isabel in *The Pirates of Penzance* and covered Rose Maurant in *Street Scene* as an Apprentice Artist with Central City Opera.

**ELIZABETH MOULTON** (Mistress of Novices) is no stranger to this great Puccini work, one of her favorites. This production marks her 10<sup>th</sup> performance of the opera, having performed *La Zia Principessa* three times, *La Maestra delle Novizie* three times, *Zelatrice* twice, *Badessa*, and a *Lay Sister* in previous productions spanning 25 years. Elizabeth is a full-time Professor of Music, teaching Individual Voice, Voice Techniques and Professional Development at The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in Manhattan and Music History and Voice at Bergen Community College.

**TOMOKO NAGO** (Mistress) is thrilled to make her debut with Regina Opera. Her recent credits include Suzuki, Mercedes, Dritte Dame, and ensemble in *Mikado* with NY/NJ opera companies. A quarterfinalist in the 2020 Mary Truman Vocal Competition, she frequently performs with the Art Song Preservation Society. She

holds a master's degree from Brooklyn College, where she won the 2023 Conservatory Opera Award. Tomoko looks forward to her lecture recital at PMTA conference to present a Japanese song cycle this summer.

**WAYNE OLSEN** (Production & Graphic Design), a Bay Ridge resident, holds degrees in Fine Art and Art History from Brooklyn College where he graduated summa cum laude, as well as a degree in Graphic Communications from Brooklyn Technical College. Mr. Olsen has received a CLIO Award, and his work has appeared in *Graphis*. Mr. Olsen has also designed sets for opera and Off-Broadway theater productions of *La Bohème*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *The Barber of Seville*, *The Impresario*, *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, *Don Pasquale*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Hansel and Gretel*, among others.

**SARAH PAJONAS** (Sister Osmina) is honored to make her company debut. She earned her MM in Vocal Performance from the Aaron Copland School of Music in 2025. She studies with Dr. Sherry Overholt. Credits include Nancy (*Albert Herring*), Sandman (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Zita (*Gianni Schicchi*), Romeo (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*), and Sesto (*La Clemenza di Tito*). Upcoming: Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (New York Opera Forum) and Dorabella (cover) in *Così Fan Tutte* (Camerata Bardi and Teatro Grattacielo).

**SARA BETH PEARSON** (Sister Angelica) is known for her dramatic interpretations of Puccini's *Tosca*, *Mimi*, and *Suor Angelica*, Verdi's Leonoras in *Il Trovatore* and *La Forza del Destino*, and *Nedda* in *I Pagliacci*, among others. Ms. Pearson has performed with Baltimore Opera, Annapolis Opera, Washington National Opera, and The Metropolitan Opera. Recent appearances include Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* with New Rochelle Opera, *Nella* in *Gianni Schicchi* with On Site Opera, and *Santuzza* in *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Regina Opera. She will next appear with the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony singing Richard Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder*.

**MELISSA PERRY** (First Alms Sister), originally from San Diego, was a dedicated ballet dancer throughout childhood, and began studying classical music halfway through her first year of college, later earning a BA in Music Performance at Seattle Pacific University. Melissa's roles include Königin der Nacht in *Die Zauberflöte*, Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffman*, and Mlle. Silberklang in *Der Schauspieldirektor*. Currently she is working on a new music recording project with composer Sophia Pavlenko and is a classical soloist at Trinity LES Lutheran Parish.

**RENNA POPLI** (Sister Osmina) is a third-year undergraduate at NYU, where she studies Vocal Performance in Laura Kay's studio and is pursuing a double-major in Economics. Her previous credits include Erste Dame in Croatian Opera Academy's production of *Die Zauberflöte* and First Spirit in Amore Opera's recent English rendition. She also serves as Artistic Operations Intern at Charles Ives Music Festival in Danbury, Connecticut. She's excited to perform with Regina Opera for the first time.

**EMMA RITTO** (First Lay Sister) is a New York-based actress, soprano, and writer. Her role and scene credits include Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Susanna and Barbarina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Lucano (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Le Prince Charmant (*Cendrillon*), Sophie (*Werther*), and Dewman (*Hänsel und Gretel*). She earned her

bachelor's and master's degrees in Classical Voice from the Manhattan School of Music. As a writer, she published *Passion* and *The Shadow* in 2023 and wrote the film *Fertility*, set to premiere in 2027.

**LUISA SIMON** (Nursing Sister) is excited to be part of her first production with Regina Opera. She has a background in both classical repertoire and musical theatre. Her favorite roles include Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* and Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Luisa is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music at New York University. For upcoming projects, follow her on Instagram @luisasimonmusic.

**RACHEL SPUND** (Abbess/Portress) is a versatile musician who has called NYC home since 2019, after she completed her Master's degree at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. She has enjoyed performing a variety of opera and church music, while teaching choir and voice lessons at a music school. Rachel was fortunate to work with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in the chorus of *Macbeth* in 2021, an experience which confirmed that she was put on this earth to make music.

**KATHERINE THOMPSON** (Sister Genovieffa) is a New York-based lyric soprano, thrilled to make her role debut as Suor Genovieffa with Regina Opera this season. Past operatic credits include Morgana in Handel's *Alcina*, Fortuna in Mozart's *Il Sogno di Scipione*, and Dorothée in Massenet's *Cendrillon*. Katherine is excited to make another role debut with Regina Opera later this season as Frasquita in Bizet's *Carmen*.

**HELEN VAN TINE** (Stage Director) is thrilled to be at Regina Opera and comes with a vast repertoire of roles, including American opera and cantata premières, with Amato Opera Theatre (NYC) and other NYC companies. She has received critical acclaim in the *New York Times*, *Daily News*, *New York Sun*, and *Opera News*, as a singer-actress with "a soaring mezzo." She enjoys directing gutsy and sensitive verismo operas. She has had the honor of studying with Margaret Leary, Luisa Mara Nadir, Nora Bosler, and National Medal of the Arts Awards recipient George Shirley.

**EMILY VIDLER** (First Alms Sister) - Until recently a resident of Honolulu, Hawai'i, Emily now resides in Brooklyn, New York. Selected credits include: *Nietzsche* (Malwida von Meysenbug/Lou Salomé cover, Off-Brand Opera); *Gianni Schicchi* (Lauretta cover, Hawaii Opera Theatre); *Destiny: A Concert of Contemporary Music* (Soloist, The New Voice Festival); *Island Inspired: A Recital of Songs from Manhattan, Cuba, and Oahu* (self-produced solo recital); *CANTEMOS ZARZUELA!* (Soloist, OPERA San Antonio - CMI Young Artist Program); and *Carmen* (Frasquita, The Narnia Festival).

**SCOTT JACKSON WILEY** (Principal Conductor) - In addition to his position as Music Director of the Regina Opera Orchestra, Mr. Wiley is Artistic Director and Conductor of the Centre Symphony Orchestra on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and a frequent conductor of the Staten Island Philharmonic. Mr. Wiley was a close friend of Maestro José Alejandro Guzmán, the longtime former Principal Conductor of Regina Opera and Music Director of both the Centre Symphony and the Staten Island Philharmonic.

**SHANELLE WOODS** (Abbess/Portress) is a performer/educator with opera, musical, and concert credits. This season marks debuts as Mercedes (*Carmen*) with

Regina Opera and Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with the Ocala Symphony Orchestra. Recent highlights: Seattle Opera, *The Grey Land* (Colour of Music Festival), Charleston Symphony Orchestra, and National Sawdust. Roles: soprano soloist (Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*), Carmen (*Carmen*), Tituba (*The Crucible*), Jenny (*Threepenny Opera*), Alma Stinney (*Stinney*), Annie (*Porgy and Bess* at Spoleto Festival USA), and the world première of *Stomping Grounds* (Glimmerglass Festival).

**VIOLETTA ZABBI** (Pianist, Vocal Concert at Feb. 21 Open Dress Rehearsal) - A native of Odessa, Ukraine, Dr. Zabbi is currently Adjunct Professor and Vocal Coach at Adelphi University and Brooklyn College; summer program in Kiev, Ukraine; and Oyster Bay Festival. She is the music director and conductor with Vocal Productions NYC, New York Opera Studio, and Delaware Valley Opera, and is a pianist and coach with Regina Opera, Hofstra University, and Opera Manhattan Repertoire. Dr. Zabbi has performed with DCINY International at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, and other concert halls in NYC.

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A copy of our latest annual report may be obtained by contacting us at Regina Opera, P.O. Box 150253, Brooklyn, NY 11215, or from the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, 28 Liberty Street, New York, New York 10005, (212) 416-8401.

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# REGINA OPERA ORCHESTRA

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Emily Lōa-Swain, Assistant Conductor

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Veronica Carpenter –  
Concertmaster

Bryn Digney  
Curtis Klippel  
Lizzie Klippel  
So Young Kim  
Christopher DiVincenzo

## **Violin II**

Mikhail Parkhomovsky  
Ashley Horvat  
Chelsea Xuereb  
Elizabeth Jones

## **Viola**

Joshua Hunton  
Maxi Estevez-Curtis  
Eric Wilson  
Rayna Fishman

## **Cello**

Halie Morris  
Stephen Dorff  
James Pederson  
David Jenkins

## **Double Bass**

Ian Fales  
Jess Block

## **Flute**

Richard Paratley

## **Oboe**

Ellen Gruber

## **Clarinet**

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## **Bassoon**

Chanelle Junio

## **French Horn**

Marc Cerri  
Ben Hommowun

## **Trumpet**

Alex Keiser

## **Trombone**

Gregory Briggler

## **Harp**

Anna Lien

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Violetta Zabbi  
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