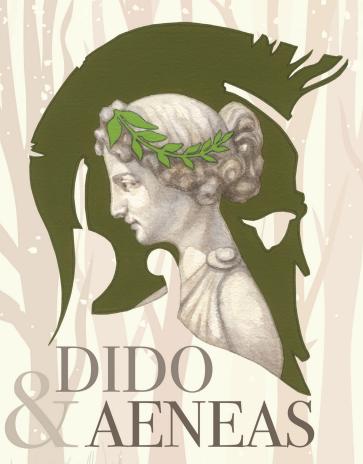
ACTTOOSTUDIO

OPERA WORKSHOP

presents



EASTWORKS

August 2 - August 4, 2018
Easthampton, MA
8:00pm



Music by Henry Purcell Original libretto by Nahum Tate

Expanded and adapted by Melinda Beasi from Virgil's *The Aeneid*

Cast

Juno
Venus
First Child Sarah Van Horn
Second Child Samantha Van Horn
Dido Ayla Connor-Kirshbaum
Belinda Eliza Carson
Second Woman Carina Gravante-Gunnells
Aeneas Angela Oldham Barca
King Iarbas Brayden Stallman
First Witch Milena Gravante-Gunnells
Second Witch Angelys Martinez
Mercury
First Sailor Craig Judicki
Iris

\$

Directed by Melinda Beasi Musical Direction by Lemuel Gurtowsky

Musical Artists

Orchestra: Lemuel Gurtowsky (harpsichord), Manar Hashmi* (violin), Joel Gonzales* (violin), Wallie Evyon Lewis (viola), Shayne Lebron-Acevedo (cello)

Concert Ensemble: Syl Simmons†, Aislinn Bail, Liam Shannon†

Production & Design

Production Stage Manager: Aislinn Bail Assistant Stage Manager: Andrea Tuthill

Lighting Design: Alexa King†

Hair & Makeup Design: Carina Gravante-Gunnells

Costume Design: Eliza Carson, Julia Jemsek, Carina Gravante-Gunnells

Costume Construction: Eliza Carson, Julia Jemsek, Carina Gravante-Gunnells,

Milena Gravante-Gunnells, Analua Alencar Moriera

Scenic Design Consultant: Isaac Goldbaum

Logo Design: Teresa Fischer Poster Design: Paul Beasi

Poster & Program Printing: Alias Solutions, Inc.

* Student musician † ATSOW alumni

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Director's Note

I've often joked that our workshop's unofficial motto is "If they didn't want us to mess with it, they shouldn't have died." The extreme impertinence really is a joke. I wouldn't have made a life out of introducing teenagers to this material if I didn't think it was enduringly brilliant, rich, and well worth their while. But the truth at the core of the joke is that I do believe that a sense of reverence for "classic" works often has the effect of sucking the life out of them, and a vital part of my mission to make these works relevant to young people is to treat them not as untouchable museum relics, but rather as living works of art that are inherently collaborative in nature. Back when composers like Purcell (or Handel, or any of the baroque masters whose work is approachable for younger voices) were alive, they changed their works all the time to suit particular audiences or popular singers of the day, so I feel that it's very much in the spirit of that culture that our workshop routinely adapts the operas we produce for the singers at hand. In our case, the adaptations we create are at least as much for our teens as human beings as they are for our teens as singers. Yes, I'll adjust keys or octaves to suit the voices at hand, but what of their voices in the metaphorical sense? It is for these voices that I work with my students to imagine a version of a narrative that suits their sensibilities and their worldview—to dig deep into these very old works and find the stories they want to tell.

With *Dido and Aeneas*, there were a number of factors I considered when adapting it for this group of teens. From a practical standpoint, the original opera is less than an hour's worth of singing, which felt honestly scanty compared to the last couple of operas we've done. Additionally, some of the characters and relationships seemed gravely underwritten, particularly the relationship between the title characters. Most importantly, I couldn't push away the discomfort I felt about producing an opera whose female lead, despite being a powerful queen, would end her own life because she got dumped by her boyfriend—one she'd apparently known for about a day, no less! Regressive sexual politics are pretty much the norm when you're steeped in material from the 17th century (or older), but was this really a story we wanted to tell?

To explore solutions, I turned back to Virgil's epic poem, *The Aeneid*, the fourth book of which is the basis for the opera's libretto. There, I found a tale no less tragic, but one in which the gods thoughtlessly manipulate humans on earth to satisfy their own grudges and play out their petty rivalries. It was brutal, rage-inducing, and difficult to read. It was also undeniably, *painfully* relevant to our lives. *This* was a story we could tell—one with real meaning, not just for me, but for my students.

The resulting adaptation is a mixture of Purcell's story and Virgil's, with a few adjustments of our own design. King Iarbas, for example, whom Virgil depicted as a scorned lover of Dido's, in our adaptation is a former lover of Aeneas, thanks to my students' persistent calls to queer up the material. But since Virgil also had the lack of foresight to die, can this really be *our* fault? (Insert wink emoticon here.) On a more serious note, it's unfortunate that stories like this, about those in power abusing others for their own personal gain, have failed to become irrelevant. But that's also why it is important we continue to tell them. I hope you'll enjoy this one.

Scenes and Musical Numbers

Prologue (Olympus) From Mount Olympus, home of the gods, the goddess Juno watches the arrival of Trojan hero Aeneas to the city of Carthage, where he entertains its queen, Dido (also known as "Elissa"), with tales of his heroic adventures. He is presented with a sword as a gift. Dido is moved by his bravery and beauty, which alarms Juno, as she knows Aeneas is fated to sail on to Italy, where his future descendents will establish a mighty empire. Venus arrives with her demigod children, and admits that she sent Cupid to place a love spell on Dido to ensure that her son, Aeneas, enjoys his respite in Carthage. Fearing for the future of her favorite city, Juno suggests that Aeneas marry Dido, thus securing safety and harmony for Carthage. Venus accepts this arrangement, though she knows that it will ultimately lead to death for Dido and the end of Carthage.

"Hither this way" (King Arthur)	. Juno, Chorus
"Let not the Trojan swain" (King Arthur, Dioclesian)	Juno, Venus
"Fairest Isle" (King Arthur) Juno, First Child	, Second Child
Scene One (Carthage) Dido expresses torment over her feelings	for Aeneas to

Scene One (Carthage) Dido expresses torment over her feelings for Aeneas to her handmaiden, Belinda. As Aeneas confesses his own admiration, stressing the advantageousness of an alliance between them, Belinda encourages them both to pursue the relationship, waving aside Dido's misgivings about Aeneas's fate.

"Overture"
"Shake the cloud from off your brow/Banish sorrow" Belinda, Chorus
"Ah, Belinda, I am prest with torment" Dido
"Grief increases by concealing" Belinda, Dido, Second Woman
"When monarchs unite"
"Whence could so much virtue spring?" Dido, Belinda, Second Woman
"Fear no danger" Belinda, Second Woman, Chorus
"See, your royal guest appears" Belinda, Aeneas, Dido
"If not for mine, for Empire's sake"
"Pursue they conquest, love"Belinda
"To the hills and the vales" Chorus
"Triumphing Dance"

Scene Two (Olympus) Frustrated by the progression of Dido and Aeneas's relationship and the lack of any apparent change in Aeneas's itinerary, Juno presses Venus for her plans to keep Aeneas in Carthage. Venus reveals that she is sending off a message to King Iarbas, a sorceror and son of Jupiter, whose lingering "love for Aeneas" will motivate him to help by conjuring a storm to prevent Aeneas from resuming his journey. Bound to land, she explains, Aeneas will certainly pursue Dido. Impatient, but momentarily satisfied, Juno leaves her to it, unwittingly setting in motion the series of events that will result in Dido's demise.

"Thou doting fool" (King Arthur)										. Juno, Venus
"Hither this way" (reprise)										Venus, Chorus
"The lot is cast" (King Arthur)										Venus

"Brave souls" (King Arthur) Full Company
Scene Three (King Iarbas's chambers) As he reads the message from Venus, Iarbas is enraged to learn that his former lover, Aeneas, is openly courting Dido. Consumed with jealousy, he prays to his father, Jupiter, for assistance and uses the power he receives to summon two magical creatures (witches) to help him execute a plan to bring doom upon Aeneas's new love interest, beginning with a storm to trap Aeneas in Carthage, where the consummation of his relationship with Dido will solidify the love spell Venus has placed on her. Afterwards, Iarbas will alert Jupiter to Aeneas's disobediance in ignoring his fated mission, ensuring Jupiter's wrath, Aeneas's departure, and painful consequences for his rival.
"Prelude/Wayward sisters, you that fright" "Harm's our delight" "The Queen of Carthage, whom we hate" "Ho, ho, ho" "Ruin'd ere the set of sun" "Ho, ho, ho" "Chorus, Witches "First Witch, Second Witch, Iarbas "Ho, ho, ho" "Chorus, Witches "First Witch, Second Witch, Iarbas "Ho, ho, ho" "But ere we this perform" "First Witch, Second Witch "First Witch, Second Witch "Chorus, Witches "But ere we this perform" "Chorus, Witches "Chorus, Wit
Scene Four (The Grove) Dido and Aeneas set out on an impromptu hunting excursion in the woods and valleys outside the city. Dido's handmaidens and Aeneas's men entertain themselves with storytelling until the sudden storm whipped up by Iarbas and his witches sends them scrambling for cover. Separated by the heavy wind and rain, Belinda and the rest flee to the safety of town, while Dido and Aeneas take shelter in a nearby cave.
"Ritornelle".Orchestra"Thanks to these lonesome vales".Belinda, Chorus"Oft she visits this loved mountain".Second Woman"Behold upon my bending spear".Aeneas, Dido"Haste, haste to town".Belinda, Chorus
Scene Five (The Cave) Now alone, Dido and Aeneas are struck with uncertainty about whether to pursue the spark of romance between them, but Iarbas and his witches resolve the question by using magic to manipulate them into giving in to their feelings. Meanwhile, Venus instructs her children in the ways of love. Juno arrives to discover that Venus's plan has indeed brought Dido and Aeneas together in presumed matrimony. She delights in their happiness as they are reunited with Dido's handmaidens in the clear light of morning.
"They tell us that you mighty powers above" (<i>The Indian Queen</i>) Second Child "If love's a sweet passion" (<i>The Faerie Queen</i>) Venus, Iarbas, Witches "Thrice happy lovers" (<i>The Faerie Queen</i>)

Scene Six (Carthage) A year has passed. Aeneas and his crew have become firmly settled in the daily life of Carthage, as Juno, Venus, and Iarbas look on. Feeling victory close at hand, Iarbas prays to his father, Jupiter, to draw attention to Aeneas's dalliances and deriliction of duty. Jupiter's response is swift, as he sends the messenger god Mercury that very night to chastise Aeneas and send him on his way. Grieving, but dutiful, Aeneas flees the palace grounds to ready his ship for the voyage on.

"How happy the lover" (<i>King Arthur</i>)	. Company
"See, even Night herself is here" (The Faerie Queen)	Belinda
"Stay, prince and hear great Jove's command" Mer	cury, Aeneas
"The fatal hour comes on apace" (Orpheus Britannicus, Book II)	Aeneas

Scene Seven (The Port, Carthage) As Aeneas and his men load up their ship, Iarbas and his witches delight over their success, though Iarbas, his jealousy yet unsatisfied, declares his intention to create a storm on the ocean to further obstruct Aeneas's journey. Meanwhile, Dido arrives at Belinda's behest to confront Aeneas. Aeneas is immediately remorseful and declares that he will defy the gods and stay with Dido after all, but she refuses, her trust in him already destroyed. Aeneas begs her to relent, to no avail. As he leaves, he returns the sword Dido gave to him when they first met.

"Come away fellow sailors/Sailor's dance"	First Sailor, Chorus
"See the flags and streamers curling"	Iarbas, First Witch, Second Witch
"Our next motion must be"	
"Destruction's our delight"	
"Witch's dance" Orchestra,	Iarbas, First Witch, Second Witch
"Your counsel all is urg'd in vain"	Dido, Belinda, Aeneas
"What shall I do?" (Dioclysian)	

Scene Eight (Carthage) Still suffering under the love spell and unable to go on without Aeneas, despite her rejection of his desperate offer, Dido takes the sword he returned to her and uses it to take her own life. She dies in Belinda's arms. The goddess Iris arrives to clip a lock of Dido's hair and lead her to the underworld.

"Thy hand, Belinda"	Dido
"When I am laid in earth"	Dido
"With drooping wings"	Chorus

Epilogue (Carthage) Belinda, inconsolable, laments the loss of her Queen, as life goes on for those Dido left behind. Juno, seeing now that Venus betrayed her, arrives in Carthage to view the aftermath, where she is confronted by Belinda. The two ultimately reconcile, agreeing that the pursuit of faithful love is essential to the human condition.

"The Plaint" (The Faerie Queen)			Belinda
"Fairest Isle" (reprise)			Juno
"You say 'tis love creates the pain" (<i>King Arthur</i>)			. Belinda, Juno, Chorus



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"We acknowledge the performers for their hard work, dedication, talent, and most importantly their hearts. In bocca al lupo!!"

Eliza Carson (Belinda) has been involved with the Opera Workshop since it was founded in 2014, playing Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and has so much enjoyed all she's done with these people. She previously played Arianna in *Il sogno d'Arianna* and Guglielmo in Cosi fan "tutti" but you probably all remember her best for her pivotal role as "sound effects/ghostly voice" in *The Medium*. Act Too Studio has taught her critical life and performance lessons since sixth grade through private lessons, Professional Track, this Opera Workshop and her place as acting apprentice to Bob. Next year she will be off to the University of Connecticut as a BFA Acting student. She hopes you enjoy the show!!!

Ayla Connor-Kirshbaum (*Dido*) is a recent graduate from Amherst Regional High School and a rising freshman at Chicago College of Performing Arts as a Vocal Performance major. She started with Act Too Studio in ninth grade and has been a part of the Opera Workshop for three years. She has been taking voice lessons since she was ten with Justina Golden. She is so grateful for the musical opportunities she has experienced with all of her wonderful mentors. She wants to thank Act Too Studio for inspiring her love of opera.

Sarah Fischer (*Venus*) is so happy to once again be in an opera with Act Too Studio Opera Workshop. She is 15 years old and attending Belchertown High School. She has been with Act Too Studio for about three years, and the Opera Workshop for two years. Her favorite role she has ever played was Madame Thenardier in Starlight's Youth Theatre's *Les Miserables*. This is her second time in an opera and she is so happy to be a part of the amazing team once again. She'd like to thank everyone involved with *Dido and Aeneas*, Melinda for making this such a wonderful experience and for her constant support, Jan and Bob for their constant support and making Act Too Studio a second home, the musicians for being awesome, and her family for always supporting her.

Carina Gravante-Gunnells (Second Woman) is so excited to be part of this year's opera! A rising tenth grader at PVPA, she has been part of Act Too Studio for seven years, and this is her third summer opera. Past roles include: Gavroche (Les Misérables/ALSCT), Dorothy (Wizard of Oz/Pelham Players), Grace Fryer (Radium Girls/PVPA), Stanley (Barnyard Follies/Playwrights Horizons, NYC) and Maggie (A Chorus Line/PVPA). She made her directorial debut this year with a one act production of the musical You're a Good Man Charlie Brown. Next year she will be a part of PVPA's Pop R'n'B ensemble and the high school musical theater troupe, and will be playing Senator Fipp in Urinetown. She would like to send love and thanks to her family and friends, the wonderful D&A cast and crew, and a special shoutout to Jan, Bob and Melinda for being the most fantastic teachers she could ever have. She loves you all so much! Hope you enjoy the show!!

Milena Gravante-Gunnells (*First Witch*) is thrilled to welcome you to *Dido and Aeneas*! A rising tenth grader at PVPA, she has been a member of Act Too Studio for seven years and has appeared in their past two operas. Past shows include

ALSCT's Les Misérables (Young Cosette), PVPA's Little Shop of Horrors (Dance ensemble) The Physicists (Möbius), Radium Girls (Berry, Marie Curie, Dr. Martland), Elephant's Graveyard (Trainer, Dramaturg), You're a Good Man Charlie Brown (Charlie Brown, Musical Director) GRP's Willy Wonka (Veruca) and Actor's Connection's Barnyard Follies (Stella, Playwrights Horizons, NYC). She is looking forward to performing in PVPA's Urinetown (Little Sally) and Jazz Ensemble: The Groovy Truth (Vocalist). She would like to thank her family, friends, cast, crew and their families for everything they have done. You are all awesome! Special thanks to Jan, Bob, and Melinda, for being the most amazing teachers in the world. Enjoy the show!

Julia Jemsek (*Juno*) Julia Jemsek is extremely excited to perform in her second summer opera with Act Too Studio! She has been with Act Too Studio for five years and the Opera Workshop for three. She is so grateful for Jan, Bob, and Melinda helping her to grow as both a performer and as a person. She just completed her tenth year at Starlight's Youth Theatre where she played roles such as Eponine in *Les Misérables* and Dinah the dining car in *Starlight Express*. She would like to thank the terrible trio for being incredible friends and her parents for their unconditional love and support. This fall, Julia will be heading off to the University of New Hampshire to pursue a BA in Acting. ATS means the world to her and she is unbelievably thankful for the wonderful opportunities and beautiful friends it has given her!!!

Craig Judicki (*First Sailor*) Craig is a rising senior at the MacDuffie School and is going into his third year with the Opera Workshop. This is his third summer with ATSOW, having been in the ensemble of *Cosi fan "tutti*" and the Assistant Stage Manager of *Il sogno d'Arianna*. Craig also has also performed for various other theater groups in the Valley, including Black Cat Theater and Exit 7 Players. In his spare time, Craig can be found writing poetry, reading, and stressing about college applications and auditions.

Greyson Lynch (*Mercury*) is a rising junior at PVPA. He is very excited about his brief moment of being a god, because who wouldn't be?! He is also excited about his role entitled "one of Aeneas's dudes." This is his second year in the Opera Workshop and his third year at Act Too Studio. Recent shows include *The Pirates of Penzance* (Frederic), *Elephant's Graveyard* (Engineer), and ALSCT's *Beauty and the Beast* (Wolf/Crony). Greyson has performed in numerous area productions with companies such as ALSCT, Valley Light Opera, Youth on Broadway, Pelham Players, and more, as well as productions at PVPA.

Angelys Martinez (Second Witch) is soooo excited to be spending her summer with Act Too Studio's summer Opera Workshop for the first time! Her time rehearsing for Dido and Aeneas has also included lots of laughs, intense watchings of El Internado alongside Milena and Carina, some pretty good cake, and Greyson's free, yet not so pleasant, showers. Angie would like to give a HUGE shoutout to Melinda Beasi for doing such an amazing job of putting together this show while still managing to love and care for us all. Enjoy the show (hope you brought tissues)!

Angela Oldham Barca (*Aeneas*) is entering her senior year at Amherst Regional High School. She joined Act Too Studio and the Opera Workshop in March 2017, and was last year's opera's Assistant Stage Manager. This fall she will be returning to the ARHS Chorale for her second and final year in the group. Angela has participated in a number of shows throughout the Valley with Pelham Players and ALSCT, as well as performing throughout the year with the ARHS theater department. Most recently, she appeared as Frances in *Melancholy Play*, prior to that playing Rona Peretti in *Spelling Bee*. She is extremely grateful for the opportunity to participate in this production, and looks forward to discovering where the coming year will lead her.

Shaina O'Malley (*Iris*) is a rising junior at PVPA. This is her third year at Act Too Studio and her first year in the Opera Workshop. This is her first time being in an opera and she is really excited. She has been in Spectrum a cappella, PVPA's a cappella group, for two years, and she will be returning next year for her third year. Next year Shaina will be in her first PVPA main stage production. Shaina is used to singing soprano and this summer she is trying out something new by singing alto on half the ensemble numbers. She says that she feels major benefits on her vocal range already. Shaina would like to thank Melinda for giving her this opportunity and introducing her to the world of opera.

Brayden Stallman (*King Iarbas*) Brayden Stallman is a rising senior at PVPA and this is his second time working with the Opera Workshop. Brayden has recently appeared in Starlight's Youth Theatre's production of *Starlight Express* as Greaseball and with PVPA in *The Glass Menagerie* as Tom Wingfield as well as *A Chorus Line* as Bobby Mills, and has worked with various theatre companies across the Valley including Starlight, Act Too Studio Opera Workshop, Black Cat Theatre, and Chicopee Comp Drama. His next production will be Black Cat's production of *The Wizard of Oz*, as the Scarecrow, and he plans to pursue theatre and musical theatre in college.

Samantha Van Horn (Second Child) is overjoyed to be working with Act Too Studio Opera Workshop to create this production. She is a student at Amherst High School and her astrological sun sign is Cancer. She has been taking lessons from ATS since fourth grade, and now going into tenth grade she's doing her first opera with them! Growing up with lots of music and improvisation, she's been in countless musicals and plays. One of her favorites was the role of Titania in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. She'd like to thank everyone involved in Dido and Aeneas and ATS for giving her the opportunity as a teenager to do something like this.

Sarah Van Horn (*First Child*) is concluding her first year in the Opera Workshop with *Dido and Aeneas* and couldn't be more exited for you to see it. She is a rising sophomore at a Amherst Regional High School and started voice lessons with Act Too in third grade. She has played some iconic musical theater roles like Annie in *Annie*, Jo in *Little Women*, and the Lion in the *Wizard of Oz* among other very fun roles. Sarah plays cello, piano, and guitar and has loved music all her life. She is thrilled to have the opportunity to explore classical music with such a fun and talented group and an amazing director.

Student Musicians

Manar Hashmi (*Violin*) has been playing the violin for six years. She has performed on other instruments as well, but always comes back to the violin. Her compositions have been performed by orchestras in Amherst, but now she spends more of her time practicing and listening to Baroque music, which is her true love. This is why she's so happy to be playing for this opera, which is a great Baroque experience. Recently, she played a Vivaldi concerto (Vivaldi was a genius!) with the ARHS Philharmonia. In contrast, she also played violin in the pit for PVPA's production of *A Chorus Line*. She runs events at the Jones Library in Amherst dedicated to playing Baroque music, and hopes that she can spend the rest of her life playing music and taking every opportunity to share it with others.

Joel Gonzales (*Violin*) Joel is 15 years old and lives in Belchertown. He has played violin for ten years, and he also plays tenor sax, bass clarinet, and does pop singing. He has done junior districts two times for violin and one time for bass clarinet as well as played for the Springfield Youth Symphony on violin for a year. He has helped out his school's music department with the violin since they don't have a program for string instruments. He played in accompaniment with the school's choir, and has played in the pit band for a school musical. Last year he also arranged a duet and performed for parents who bring their children to Gerry's Music Shop to show how exciting violin can be for kids.

Concert Singers

Liam Shannon (*Baritone*) is 20 years old and an alumnus of the Act Too Studio Opera Workshop. He performed in a few concerts with the Opera Workshop, most notably as a member of the chorus of Act Too Studio's adaptation of *Così fan tutte* (*Così fan "tutti"*). He studies classical voice with Thomas Bogdan as a Vocal Performance major at Bennington College in Vermont and just came back from a month and a half stay in Italy, attending a four week YAP (Young Artist Program) for aspiring opera singers in the city of Lucca. While in Lucca, he studied with Peter Volpe, Marco Nisticò, Antonella Gozzoli, Marcello Cormio, and Raphael Fusco. He is happy to return to Act Too Studio's adaptation of *Dido and Aeneas* and hopes you enjoy the show.

Syl Simmons (*Soprano*) previously worked with Act Too Studio Opera Workshop as a stage manager and light designer for *The Medium*, and as Orfeo in *Il sogno d'Arianna*. A past member of North Star's "North Star Players," Syl has been in productions of *As You Like It, The Skriker*, and other short plays and works. They also participated in Real Live Theatre's staged reading of *When Last We Flew*. In their spare time, Syl farms and writes music. They hope to continue working on original works and supporting local artists. They are excited to be working with Act Too Studio Opera Workshop once again!

Artistic Staff

Melinda Beasi (Director) received her earliest training in the performing arts from her parents, Bob and Jan Klump, whom she joined in 2014 as Associate Artistic Director at Act Too Studio. Melinda studied vocal performance at Carnegie-Mellon University, in the studio of Dr. Lee Cass. She has performed at Pittsburgh's Civic Light Opera, Pittsburgh Opera Theater, the Goodspeed Opera House, the Papermill Playhouse, the Olney Theater Center, and New York's City Center among many others. Melinda toured as Sophie in the First National Tour of Terrence McNally's Master Class starring Faye Dunaway and as Kathy in The Night Kitchen's Really Rosie, designed and directed by author Maurice Sendak. Other credits include Sweeney Todd with George Hearn and Judy Kaye, Strike Up the Band with Emily Loesser, Jason Danieley, and Kristin Chenoweth, and One Touch of Venus with Melissa Errico, David Alan Grier, and Jane Krakowski. In 2002, Melinda released an album of her original songs, Dorrie's True Story, featuring James David Jacobs on cello, bass, and recorder. She has also appeared on albums by singer-songwriter Meghan Cary and rocker Tommy Grasso, and was an original member of alternative rock band The Steve Friday Band.

Act Too Studio's first production, *Goblin Market*, marked Melinda's directorial debut here in the Pioneer Valley, followed by *The Medium*, *Il sogno d'Arianna* (for which she also wrote the English adaptation), and last year's *Cosi fan "tutti.*" Melinda is the founder and director of Act Too Studio's teen Opera Workshop.

Lemuel Gurtowsky (*Musical Director*) is a collaborative pianist and piano teacher residing in Hadley, MA. Prior to moving to the Pioneer Valley, Lemuel was music director/organist at The Church of Christ, Congregational in Stoney Creek, CT as well as St. John's Episcopal Church in Bristol, CT. Lemuel has also toured extensively as a composer and songwriter, recently performing at the The Music Hall of Williamsburg (NYC), Reading and Leeds Festivals (UK), and SXSW (Austin, TX). His songs have also appeared on NBC's *Parenthood* and MTV's *Fantasy Factory*.

Lemuel recently received his Master's degree in collaborative piano from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst where he studied under Nadine Shank. He also holds a Bachelor's degree in music theory and piano from The Hartt School in West Hartford, CT. Previously, Lemuel has provided musical direction for Act Too Studio's productions of *Goblin Market*, *The Medium*, *Il sogno d'Arianna*, and *Cosi fan "tutti*."

Shayne Lebron-Acevedo (Cello/Orchestra Coach) was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY and is a NYC-based cellist and teaching artist. After partnering with the Department of Education for his Carnegie Hall Solo Debut in 2016, he has gone on to become a teaching artist at various public schools throughout the five boroughs. He is currently the cello teacher and co-conductor of the orchestras at P.S. 160 in Brooklyn, where he has taught for the past two years. He began playing the cello at age 14 under the tutelage of Mr. James David Jacobs. It is with Mr. Jacobs that Shayne developed a strong interest in Baroque music, and had his first lessons in teaching.

Lessons with Mr. Jacobs were more akin to joining a dedicated music camp for the entire day, where there was food, desserts, instrument lessons, theory, chamber music, and sight reading. This was part of a musical tradition passed down to him from none other than the legendary Mildred Rosner, whose philosophy could be reduced to a single quote, "My performance is teaching. My product is my student." This would lead to some problems later on, as the typical modern music lesson ends at 59 minutes and 59 seconds, and the student is subsequently unceremoniously ushered out of the room as the next anxious student rushes in to begin a lesson for which he is now late.

Despite struggling as an outsider against an insular music community, Shayne went on to earn a Bachelor of Music from CUNY Brooklyn (2012) where he studied with Dr. Frederick Zlotkin. He was then awarded a Graduate Assistantship for his Master of Music at Ball State University (2015) in Muncie, Indiana, where he studied with Dr. Peter Opie. Part of his assistantship duties were to perform with the Muncie Symphony Orchestra, Ball State Symphony Orchestra, and Graduate Conducting Seminar, as well as give individual cello lessons and group coaching sessions to undergraduate music students. After graduating, Shayne revisited some of his earlier lessons with Mr. Jacobs, and decided to renew his focus on teaching and ensuring that students would get to experience this older and more inclusive style of music education--one filled with students' interests, a reverence for musical character building, and a respect for one's musical lineage.

Although teaching appears to be Shayne's primary focus, he also maintains a performance schedule with two ensembles of varying style. One ensemble is a group named Spellbound Strings which focuses on anime and video game music performances and has performed as guest artists at several university conventions throughout the U.S., and the other is a competition-winning electronic music group named Yut and the Hot Four, of which Shayne is a founder and serves as Cellist, DJ, Rapper, and Composer/Arranger. He also freelances with several orchestras in NYC, such as the Asian Cultural Symphony Orchestra, and the Manhattan Symphonie.

Wallie Evyon Lewis (Viola/Orchestra Coach) was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. She started playing violin in the 6th grade (2006) and went on to start viola the next year. Wallie started a young musicians' program called IMA/Indianapolis Music Academy and studied under Laura Wooten-Khan for three and a half years. After her teacher moved to Washington D.C., Wallie joined three orchestra programs, which included the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, New World Youth Orchestra, and North Central Symphony. Her new teacher, Sheldon Peyson, encouraged her to audition to play side by side with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Her audition was successful her freshman, junior, and senior year (when she also placed first chair).

By her sophomore year, she earned the Dick Dennis Scholarship, which granted free lessons to students. By senior year, with a new teacher, Terry Langdon, Wallie won the

North Central Symphony Concerto Competition, placing first with other awards including the Avion Award and Most Outstanding Sophomore and Junior.

Wallie went on to graduate from Ball State University, where she studied with Katrin Meidell for her Bachelors Degree in viola performance. Wallie has played in the pit orchestras of many stage musicals, including *Shrek*, *Parade*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Hairspray*, and *Into the Woods*. Other credits include freelance gigs with the Kokomo Symphony, Marion Philharmonic, and Asian Cultural Symphony. Wallie is 23 years old and plans to pursue her Masters in music as well.

Alexa King (Lighting Designer) is a rising senior at New York University, studying Drama and Politics. At NYU, she has attended both Playwrights Horizons Theatre School and the Production and Design studio. At P & D, she studied lighting under Christina Watanabe and sound under Mark Bennett and Danny Erdberg. Most recently, she lit the original musical All the Junk in the Whole Wide World (and the Kids Who Sort Through It), directed by Alex Bush, and Niamh Copple's adaptation of Blue is the Warmest Colour, both at Playwrights Horizons Theatre School. Recently, she studied abroad at NYU London. She would like to thank Act Too Studio and the Opera Workshop for always welcoming her back home.

Isaac Goldbaum (*Scenic Design Consultant*) is a recent graduate from PVPA and is very excited to be going off to Salem State University in the Fall where he will be majoring in Scenic Design. He has been involved with Act Too Studio and taken lessons over the last few years and is so happy to be able to contribute to this show as resident Scenic designer/consultant. He hopes you enjoy the show!

Production Staff

Aislinn Bail (*Production Stage Manager, Concert Ensemble*) is so excited to be working in her first performance of Act Too Studio's Opera Workshop. This is her second time stage managing and she is beyond honored to be doing it. She has been performing on stage for ten years and was the music director for Black Cat Theater's production of *The Little Mermaid*. For two years she has been studying singing and acting at Act Too Studio. She will be attending Long Island University in the fall for musical theater and would like to thank Jan, Bob, and Melinda for getting her there.

Andrea Tuthill (Assistant Stage Manager) is a rising tenth-grader at PVPA. She was stage manager for The Glass Menagerie (2018) at PVPA. She was assistant stage manager for Marie Antoinette (2017) and Comic Sins (2018) at PVPA. She was a stagehand for Little Shop of Horrors (2017) and High School Musical (2018), also at PVPA. She has acted in a couple shows at PVPA. She has acted in many shows with Starlight's Youth Theatre. She is really excited for everyone to see this show and has had a wonderful time working on it. She would like to give a huge shoutout to Melinda who has been a magnificent director. She would like to thank Aislinn as well, for being an excellent stage manager buddy! She would also like to thank her parents for driving her to and from rehearsals.





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Thank you, too, to our anonymous donors.

They know who they are.

About the Workshop

Act Too Studio Opera Workshop is an ongoing, student-driven educational arts project with performances throughout the year, including a fully-staged opera each summer.

Our growing workshop includes students between the ages of 13 and 19 at varying levels of vocal development, musical skill, and experience. Works are chosen with those factors in mind, and though this work is intended to be performed for the community, the focus of the workshop itself is very process-heavy. In order to bring their work to performance level, students are guided through deep musical and theatrical analysis of everything they do, along with study of the work's cultural and historical context.

Act Too Studio Opera Workshop began in the Summer of 2014, with a week-long look at the second act of W.A. Mozart's *The Marriage of Figa-ro*. In 2015, the workshop debuted its annual opera scene night, a formal classical recital, and its first fully-staged opera, Gian-Carlo Menotti's *The Medium*. In 2016, it presented *Il sogno d'Arianna*, an original narrative adapted from the works of 17th-century composer Claudio Monteverdi, and in 2017, returned to Mozart with a new adaptation of *Cosi fan tutte*.

Our students will not all become opera singers—most likely very few of them will—nor is that the point of this program. Rather, they will be a driving force in shaping the future of the arts in our society. They will be the ones who, in industry and education, determine our musical and artistic legacy. Opera is for everyone. Let our students show you how! Learn more at atsoperaworkshop.com.

Support Us

We're committed to keeping participation in the Opera Workshop accessible to all our teens, which means that we rely on your donations to help us pay pianists for our rehearsals and performances, and for production expenses such as costumes, lighting, space, musicians, and other artists.



You can donate by credit card online at fracturedatlas.org or in person by check. Checks should be made payable to Fractured Atlas, with "Act Too Studio Opera Workshop" in the memo line.

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