Hatuey: Memory of Fire

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.montclair.edu/peak-performances-2018-2019

Part of the Theatre and Performance Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the PEAK Performances Programming History at Montclair State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2018-2019 Borders and Boundaries by an authorized administrator of Montclair State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@montclair.edu.
United States Premiere!
Frank London | Elise Thoron | Music-Theatre Group

Hatuey: Memory of Fire

September 14—23, 2018
Alexander Kasser Theater

Montclair State University
United States Premiere!
A Music-Theatre Group Production
Produced in Association with
Peak Performances @ Montclair State University

Hatuey: Memory of Fire

Based on the Yiddish poem Hatuey by Asher Penn

Music by Frank London Libretto by Elise Thoron

Music Director/Conductor Stage Director Choreographer
Constantine Kitsopoulos Mary Birnbaum Maija García

Performers:
Hatuey/Lazaro Nathaniel Stampley*
Oscar Matthew Patrick Morris*
Tinima Jennifer Jade Ledesna*
Alicia/Kasike Nicolette Mavroleon
Vito/Behike Ethan Simpson
Velasquez/Machado Tomas Cruz
Hernan/Cortez Enrique Acevedo*
Ernesto Gerardo Contino
Ondina Jen Anaya*
Conception Eliza Bonet*
Ramon Tislarm Bouie
Xiomara Lauren Cox
Graciela Myriam Gadri
Orestes Abdiel Jacobsen
Cachita Sandra Marante
Hector/Priest Jorell Williams*
Instrumentalists:
Pablo Aslan, bass
Richie Barshay, percussion
Sarah Carter, cello
Guido Gonzalez, trumpet
Carlos Maldonado, percussion
Peter Saleh, percussion
Arcolris Sandoval, piano
Norbert Stachel, wind, reeds

Set Designer Camellia Koo
Costume Designer Oana Botez
Lighting Designer Devorah Kengmana
Sound Designers Sam Lerner, Brian Walters
Hair, Wig, and Makeup Designer Dave Bova
Casting Arnold Mungioli, CSA
Music Coordinator John Miller

Dramaturg/Assistant Director Julia Bumke
Assistant Music Director David Moody
Assistant Choreographer Rafael Nunez
Production Manager J. Ryan Graves
Production Stage Manager Jessica L. Halem*
Production Assistants Jaylyn Simmons, Kyara Valdez, Nora Winsler
Music Preparation NYC Music Services, Joseph Trefler
Assistant Costume Designer Karen Boyer
Assistant Lighting Designer Hector Quintero
Assistant Hair, Wig, and Makeup Designer Cassie Williams
Headdress Designer Jorge Estevez
Assistant Stage Manager Hannah Lee
Mirror Set Build Silovsky Studio
Yiddish Coaches Moishe Rosenfeld, Motl Didner, Noah Barrera
Translation Moishe Rosenfeld

Producing Director Diane Wondisford   Co-Producer Michael Posnick
This production is dedicated to Eileen Penn Posnick.

*Appearing courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

Hatuey: Memory of Fire was developed in residence at the Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University and at Opera de la Calle in Havana, Cuba, with Music-Theatre Group in New York; and at the MASS MoCA and Ucross venues of the Sundance Theatre Institute. Generous support provided by David Berg, National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene, The Kronhill Pletka Foundation, The Linestorm Foundation, The Arthur Loeb Foundation, the Posnick Family Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, The Malka Fund, Jim Joseph Foundation, and Elias, Yael, and Richard Rimer.

“I’ll See You In C-U-B-A” Music and Lyrics by Irving Berlin. This selection is used by special arrangement with Rodgers & Hammerstein, on behalf of the Estate of Irving Berlin, www.irvingberlin.com. All Rights Reserved.

Duration: 110 minutes, no intermission.

In consideration of both audiences and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

**Director’s Note**

Hatuey: Memory of Fire invokes three different worlds, each essential to understanding the opera’s story:

The first is **a Havana nightclub in 1931**, a powder keg of secrets and ambition, where everyone performs for the dictator Machado and his deputies, hopeful for tips. These scenes are sung and spoken in English and Spanish.

The second is **Cuba in 1511**, a natural paradise where the Siboney people fend off the Spanish Conquistadors, pirate-missionaries who pillage the land for gold and commit atrocities against the Siboney. This world blooms out of Oscar Penn’s poem, and is portrayed in Yiddish.
The third is Ukraine in the late 1910s, where pogroms are so common and deadly that the United States instates the Johnson-Reed Act in 1924 to limit the number of Jewish (and other) immigrants who are allowed to enter. This world is seen only in flashes of Oscar’s memories, but its presence is felt throughout his life in Cuba. It forces Oscar to flee to Havana and propels him into the nightclub, where the lines begin to blur between past pain and present rebellion.

Our opera is a collage of scenes and numbers that, together, tell the story of Hatuey, the Taíno hero of Cuba who resisted the Spanish conquistadors. This tale is interwoven with the semi-fictional story of 23-year-old Oscar Penn, who is inspired to write his Yiddish epic poem Hatuey while falling in love with a nightclub singer and getting swept up in her plot to help the students protest Machado. All of our sung Yiddish text directly quotes the poem, and many of the songs in Spanish are either real Cuban songs or are derived from them.

At the foundation of this piece is empathy, how telling someone else’s story can shake you free of your own repression. In empathizing with the anti-Machado student revolutionaries in Havana, and the Siboney rebels who came 400 years before them, Oscar discovers a potential way to expiate the horrors he witnessed in Ukraine. Just as it did for Oscar in 1931, Hatuey’s story sings loudly today about the heritage of oppression, and our collective and relentless hunger for freedom.

—Mary Birnbaum, Director, with Julia Bumke, Production Dramaturg

About the Artists

Frank London (Composer) is a Grammy-winning trumpeter and composer. He composed Salome: Woman of Valor (with Adeena Karasick), A Night in the Old Marketplace (with Glen Berger and Alexandra Aron), 1001 Voices: A Symphony for a New America (with Judith Sloan and Warren Lehrer), and Green Violin (with Elise Thoron). He is co-founder of The Klezmatics and leads bhangra/Yiddish band Sharabi (w/Deep Singh), the Astro-Hungarian supergroup Glass House Orchestra, the Shekhinah Big Band, and his Klezmer Brass Allstars. He has worked with Lester Bowie, LaMonte Young, They Might Be Giants, David Byrne, Jane Siberry, John Zorn, Itzhak Perlman, Pink Floyd, LL Cool J, Mel Tormé, and Hector LaVoe.
and is featured on more than 500 CDs. London will premiere *Ghetto Songs* at the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and music direct Carnegie Hall’s Celebration of Yiddish, *From Shtetl to Stage*. He composed music for John Sayles’s *The Brother from Another Planet*, Yvonne Rainer’s *MURDER and murder*, and Karin Coonrod’s *The Merchant of Venice*; was artistic director of KlezKanada; music directed David Byrne and Robert Wilson’s *The Knee Plays*; and has been featured on *Sex and the City*. He was knighted by Hungary for his work advancing Jewish and multicultural Hungarian music and culture.

**Elise Thoron** (Librettist) is a playwright, director, and translator. Her plays have been produced in the United States, Europe, Japan, and Cuba: *Green Violin*, music by Frank London (*Nine Contemporary Jewish Plays*); *Prozak and the Platypus*, music by Jill Sobule (CD/graphic novella); *Charlotte: Life? Or Theater?*, based on paintings by Charlotte Salomon; and *Recycling: washi tales*, an ongoing collaboration with distinguished Japanese paper artist Kyoko Ibe. For more than 20 years, Thoron created cross-cultural exchanges with Russian and American theater artists; she adapted and directed *The Great Gatsby* in Russian at the Pushkin Theater in Moscow. As associate artistic director at American Place Theatre, Thoron co-founded Literature to Life, a highly successful theater literacy program now nationwide. She developed Tony Award–winning spoken-word poet Lemon Andersen’s *Toast* at the Public Theater and *County of Kings*, which continues to play in venues around the world. elisethoron.com

**Mary Birnbaum** (Stage Director), whose stage direction of opera and theater *New York Times* critic Anthony Tommasini called “viscerally overwhelming” (*The Rape of Lucretia* at Juilliard) and “genuinely insightful ... vibrant” (*The Classical Style* at Carnegie Hall), works both internationally, from Taiwan (*Otello*) to Central America (*L’Elisir* and *Bohème* at the National Theatres of Costa Rica and Guatemala), Australia, and Israel, and across the US (Opera Philadelphia, Seattle Opera, Opera Columbus, Virginia Arts Festival [*Kept*], Ojai Festival, Boston Baroque). In *Opera Magazine*, George Loomis wrote that Birnbaum’s “thoughtful direction [of *Eugene Onegin* at Juilliard] was rich with imaginative touches,” and the *Houston Press* termed her *Hansel and Gretel* a “stunner, perhaps Opera Houston’s most perfect realization. [The Company] has found a director of real quality in Mary Birnbaum.” Birnbaum has been honored to work with such musical artists as
Stephen Wadsworth, Jeremy Denk, Matt Aucoin, Kristin Kuster, Susanna Phillips, Stuart Skelton, and Steven Stucky. Currently associate director of the post-graduate Artist Diploma in Opera Studies program at Juilliard, Birnbaum teaches and coaches acting for singers at Juilliard, Bard College, and in the Lindemann Young Artist Program at the Metropolitan Opera. A graduate of Harvard College, Birnbaum trained professionally in stage movement at L’Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris. She is a past nominee at the International Opera Awards, and her production of *La bohème* will open the Santa Fe Opera season in 2019.

**Maija García** (Choreographer) is a Cuban-American director and choreographer whose signature work is featured in Guthrie Theater’s *West Side Story* directed by Joe Haj, Spike Lee’s Netflix series *She’s Gotta Have It*, and Amazon feature film *Chi-Raq*. García directed *Salsa, Mambo, Cha Cha Cha* in Havana, Cuba; Heather Henson and Ty Defoe’s *CRANE* at the Lied Center in Nebraska; and *Legend of Yauna*, featuring Zap Mama, at BAM Fisher. Choreography credits include *Snow in Midsummer* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, *Cuba Libre* by Carlos Lacámara at Artists Repertory Theatre, *Another Word for Beauty* by José Rivera at the Goodman Theatre, and *Fats Waller Dance Party* with Jason Moran and Meshell Ndegeocello at Harlem Stage, Kennedy Center, and international jazz festivals. García worked alongside Bill T. Jones to choreograph the Tony Award–winning musical *FELA!* on Broadway, becoming creative director of *FELA! World Tour* and *FELA! The Concert*. A graduate of California Institute of Integral Studies with a BA in Sustainable Development, García founded Organic Magnetics to generate urban folklore for the future, producing *Ghosts of Manhattan: 1512–2012*, an interactive history in Fort Tryon Park and *I Am NY: Juan Rodriguez* at El Museo del Barrio.

**Constantine Kitsopoulos** (Music Director/Conductor) has been general director of New York Grand Opera and Chatham Opera and music director of Festival of the Arts Boca. He has appeared as a guest conductor with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Houston Symphony, Detroit Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Dallas Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic, Fort Worth Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, and Calgary Philharmonic, among many others. Broadway credits include *Cyrano, An Inspector Calls, Swan Lake, Les Misérables*, Baz Luhrmann’s production of *La bohème*, *Dracula,*
Coram Boy, A Catered Affair, The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess, and Rodgers & Hammerstein’s Cinderella. His recordings include cast albums of Baz Luhrmann’s production of La bohème, the first English language recording of Weill/Brecht’s Happy End, A Catered Affair, and The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess. His compositions include Temple (co-composer) and Holy Week (libretto by Evangelia Kingsley). He has taught at Indiana University Opera Theater, New York University, his private conducting studio, and numerous master classes throughout the United States. He studied piano with Marienka Michna, Chandler Gregg, Edward Edson, and Sophia Rosoff and conducting with Semyon Bychkov, Gustav Meier, and his principal teacher, Vincent La Selva. Upcoming appearances include his debut with the Chicago Symphony and the Bernstein Mass with Indiana University Opera Theater. kitsopoulos.com

Enrique Acevedo (Hernan/Cortez) has performed Off-Broadway in GIANT (The Public Theater), The Countess of Storyville (Antonio, opposite Deborah Cox), Zapata! The Musical (Emiliano Zapata, Best Performance Award), Zorba (Encores! City Center), Latin Heat, and Petunia. European tour credits include Grease (Danny) and Jesus Christ Superstar (Judas), and he performed in the Asian tour of The King and I (Lun Tha). National tours include Bombay Dreams (Vikram u/s) and West Side Story (Bernardo). Regional theater credits include In the Heights (Kevin), Evita (Peron), Miss Saigon (John), Man of La Mancha (Pedro), Camelot (Paper Mill Playhouse), The King and I (the King), Paint Your Wagon (Julio), Makandal (Harlem Stages), and Carmen La Cubana (Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris).

Jen Anaya (Ondina), a New York–based art-maker, is honored to be telling this story. New work is Anaya’s passion and they’ve been blessed to debut work on New York City stages (Joe’s Pub, Signature Theater, A.R.T./New York Theaters) and all over the country as a singer, actor, writer, and cellist. They believe in art as a powerful tool for communication, awakening, healing, and change. Favorite roles include Maria in West Side Story, Frida 25 (and 19 others) in Casa Blue: The Last Moments in the Life of Frida Kahlo, Amy in Can You Hear Me, Baby?, a chor member of Marisa Michelson’s Constellation Chor, and birth doula. Gratitude to the creative team, E & Z, my family, tribe, the freedom fighters who came before us, and those who follow. jenanaya.com
Eliza Bonet (Conception), a Cuban-American mezzo-soprano, made her debut at the Kennedy Center in the 2017–18 season as a member of Washington National Opera’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, presenting her role debut as Bradamante in Handel’s *Alcina* last November. As comfortable performing musicals as she is opera, Bonet performed in the Kennedy Center’s Leonard Bernstein at 100 celebration as Paqueta in Bernstein’s *Candide* and will be joining Atlanta Opera’s production of *West Side Story* this November, both directed by Francesca Zambello. Other recent roles include a world premiere and CD recording of *Three-way* as The Domme, Angelina (*La Cenerentola*), Dinah (*Trouble in Tahiti*), Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and Carmen (*La tragédie de Carmen*). Bonet returns to Washington National Opera for the 2018–19 season for *The Lion, Unicorn, and Me* by Jeanine Tesori and a world premiere of *Taking Up Serpents* by Kamala Sankaram.

Tislarm Bouie (Ramon) is from Brooklyn, NY. He graduated from the Professional Performing Arts School and received his BFA in Dance from the University of the Arts. He has performed with Ronald K. Brown’s Evidence Dance Company, Philadanco’s 2nd Company, Norwegian Cruise Line, Public Theater’s production of *Blueprint Specials*, Gateway Playhouse’s production of *Swing!*, and Alicia Keys. He has been in featured in Macy’s, Samsung, Fifa World Cup, and Champs commercials. He is grateful to be a part of this production. @tislarmbouie.

Gerardo Contino (Ernesto), born in Havana, Cuba, is a multi-talented singer and songwriter, classically trained and with years of experience in Cuban and American salsa, jazz, and big orchestra bands. Contino created Los Habaneros in 2012, which has gone on to become the “Best Band in Manhattan” (WNYC/NPR) and “Best Cuban Dance Band” (*NY Latin Culture Magazine*). His latest project is Afro-Latin Renaissance. Contino is also the lead Latin singer for the Max Weinberg Orchestra and lead vocalist for the Larry Harlow’s Latin Legends Band. He has toured in Italy, France, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Venezuela, Mexico, Peru, and Canada. Contino is a recipient of the 2018, 2015, and 2014 Lower Manhattan Cultural Council grant for the Manhattan Community Arts Fund. He received his education in law at the University of Havana and his master’s in law (LLM) at Cardozo School of Law.
Lauren Cox (Xiomara) is a performer, teacher, choreographer, and poet based in Harlem. She has a degree in Sociology and is master faculty at the year-round Jazz & Contemporary program for Joffrey Ballet School. Cox is a nationally ranked former rhythmic gymnast and has since studied extensively a plethora of dance styles, from Haitian folklore to jazz, street styles, salsa, samba, modern, and more. Cox’s performance credits include Gwen Stefani, Alicia Keys, Pharrell Williams, LL Cool J, Saturday Night Live, America’s Got Talent, The View, national commercials for Samsung, Apple, and NYU Langone, as well as the Off-Broadway hit Seeing You directed by Ryan Heffington and Randy Weiner, to name a few. Her choreography has been commissioned by Joffrey Ballet School, Harlem Arts Festival, Columbia University, Hunter College and more. Cox is in love with the history and healing powers of dance, and her highly acclaimed Ted Talk is a perfect example of her unique artistic expression. laurencox.org

Tomás Cruz (Velasquez/Machado) is known for his “... gorgeous, mellifluous, pure tone” (New York Classical Review), as well as his stylistic flexibility. He has performed new operas and concert works by Steve Reich, Judd Greenstein, Missy Mazzoli, Anthony Braxton, Matthew Schickele, Pulitzer Prize-winner Du Yun, Petr Kotik, Matt Marks, and Toshi Reagon, among others. Other credits include the world tour of Philip Glass and Robert Wilson’s opera Einstein on the Beach, Saturday Night Live, Damien Rice, Helga Davis’s The Love Show, a cappella group Duwende, and experimental ensemble Ekméles. He has recorded for Nickelodeon (Duwende), Chris Cerrone, Matthew Sheens, and Yelena Eckemoff and has performed/recorded for live art works by Martin Creed, Andrea Galvani, Miguel Gutierrez, Amber Sloan, and Jane Benson. tomasvoice.com

Myriam Gadri (Graciela) was born in Switzerland and also raised in Togo (Africa) and London (UK). She is a dancer, performer, and model now living in New York. Gadri has performed on the Today Show numerous times, including the Summer Concert Series with Pitbull and Mark Anthony; the Ugly Betty season 4 launch party; Fake Off season 2 with DECA Crew on TrueTV; NY Knicks’ “Latin” halftime show at Madison Square Garden; with Don Omar in the Latin Billboard Awards two years running, choreographed by Maria Torres; the International Indian Film Academy; Marc Jacobs’s Decadence fragrance launch; the Latin Quarter Casino Show; and made an appearance on the Saturday Night Live Christmas Special
with Amy Adams. She has made numerous appearances infusing Latin and African
dance styles with several dance companies. She made her US musical debut with
*The Wiz* at Arkansas Repertory Theatre and performed in *In the Heights*, directed
and choreographed by Luis Salgado, where she was the first woman to play the role
of Graffiti Pete in the first US Spanish production, which won 10 Helen Hayes Awards
in 2018. She toured with *The Hip Hop Nutcracker* where she played the Mother, had
the honor to be in *Broadway Bares—Equity Fights Aids* in Sekou McMiller’s piece,
was assistant choreographer for Telemundo UpFront, and recently toured her own
work in England. She is humbled to be on this journey with *Hatuey* to keep growing
and honing her craft.

**Abdiel Jacobsen** (Orestes), a native of Côte d’Ivoire, has been a principal dancer
of the Martha Graham Dance Company since 2011 and has performed many lead
roles in Graham’s iconic repertory, including *Errand into the Maze* with prima
ballerina Diana Vishneva. He has performed works by Nacho Duato, Robert Wilson,
Lar Lubovitch, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Sonya Tayeh, Luca Veggetti, Andonis Foniadakis,
Michelle Dorrance, Larry Keigwin, Doug Varone, Richard Move, and more. Jacobsen
received a BFA in Dance from the University of the Arts and is also a professional
competitive ballroom and Latin dance champion. He has been a guest artist with the
Cecilia Marta Dance Company and the Gotham Chamber Opera. Jacobsen currently
is a Fulbright Specialist of the US Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs and World Learning.

**Jennifer Jade Ledesna** (Tinima), a sweet, seductive songstress and a multilingual
New York City native, is an alumna of the New School Jazz Conservatory and of
the “Famed” LaGuardia Arts. A true vaudevillian at heart, Equity actress, and vocal
jet setter, Ledesna often performs at Aux Trois Mailletz in Paris. She has sung at
Carnegie Hall with Bobby McFerrin in the Instant Opera! Young Artists Concert and
in the world premiere tour of *Chapel/Chapter* with the electric Bill T. Jones/Arnie
Zane Dance Company. She graced the stage once again last summer at Norway’s
International Silda Jazz Festival and tore down the house in Lausanne at the
CHORUS Jazz Club in Switzerland.

**Sandra Marante** (Cachita) is honored to be a part of this beautiful story! She
recently filmed her first costar television role on *Bull* (CBS). Favorite New York City
theater roles include Belle *(Beauty and the Beast)*, Adina *(Elixir of Love)*, and Lalume *(Kismet)*. Regional credits include Daniela *(In the Heights)*, Aldonza *(Man of La Mancha)*, Josephine *(HMS Pinafore)*, Cinderella *(Cinderella)*, and Eponine *(Les Misérables)*. Versatile in both opera and musical theater, Marante performed in both *Madama Butterfly* and *My Fair Lady* with Charlottesville Opera’s 2015–16 season. She is a proud graduate of New World School of Arts (BM), Roosevelt University (MM), and University of Connecticut (PC). Love to Mom & Kam, this one is for you, Abuela. Para Siempre en mi corazón. sandramarantesoprano.com

**Nicolette Mavroleon** (Alicia/Kasike), soprano, has been acclaimed as a performer who “generates a special magic” *(Brooklyn Discovery)* in both opera and concert repertoire. This past season, she joined Pittsburgh Festival Opera as a Cadwallader Resident Artist, where she performed the role of Musetta in *La bohème*. She also made her Carnegie Hall debut as the soloist in Beethoven’s Mass in C Major and Fauré’s Requiem along with the New England Symphonic Ensemble. At the Juilliard School, she was most recently seen as Tina in Jonathan Dove’s *Flight* and Nerone in Handel’s *Agrippina*. She made her international debut performing Luis Bacalov’s *Misa Tango*, a Spanish-language adaptation of the classic liturgical Mass to Argentinian tango rhythms, with the Sinfonietta Vorarlberg and the AmadeusChor of Küssnacht am Rigi, Switzerland.

**Matthew Patrick Morris** (Oscar) has performed on the West End in *Candide* (King Charles, Inquisitor); at Bouffes du Nord, Piccolo Teatro, and in the international tour of Peter Brook’s *Une flûte enchantée* (Papageno, Molière Award Best Musical); and Off-Broadway in *La Périchole* at New York City Opera. He was in the national tour of *Scrooge the Musical* (Young Scrooge). Regional credits include *Crossing* by Matt Aucoin, directed by Diane Paulus at A.R.T. and BAM, and *Les Misérables* (Marius) and *Evita* (Che) at Amarillo Opera. Film credits include *The Producers!,* and he appeared on television in *Law & Order SVU*. He has been a soloist with the American, Boston, London, Memphis, and MDR Leipzig Symphony Orchestras. Morris holds a BM from the Juilliard School and an MM from Bard College Conservatory. He is training to be an Alexander teacher with Ann Rodiger at the Balance Arts Center. Morris would like to dedicate this performance to all of our ancestors and personally to KK. matthewpatrickmorris.com
Ethan Simpson (Vito/Behike) is quickly gaining international recognition for his incredible versatility as both a singer and actor with his “robust baritone voice and compelling stage presence” (Chicago Tribune). Simpson can be seen as César in the film Bel Canto alongside Academy Award winner Julianne Moore and Ken Watanabe, featuring vocals from Renée Fleming and directed by Paul Weitz. Recent engagements include Jauno in West Side Story with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of the Metropolitan Opera’s Yannick Nézet-Séguin; Schaunard in La bohème with the Martina Arroyo Foundation in New York City; and the title roles of Count di Luna, Rigoletto, Don Giovanni, The Demon, and Gianni Schicchi, Albert in Werther, and Alberich in Das Reingold, all as a resident artist with the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. Simpson was a 2018 semi-finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and holds a master’s degree in Voice Performance from Northwestern University.

Nathaniel Stampley (Hatuey/Lazaro) has appeared on Broadway in CATS, The Color Purple (original and revival), The Lion King (West End), and The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess. Off-Broadway credits include Big Love, Signature Theatre; Fiorello!, Lost in the Stars, NY City Center’s Encores!; and The First Noel, Classical Theatre of Harlem. Regional credits include LEMPICKA, Williamstown Theatre Festival; Man of La Mancha (Jeff Award), The Bridges of Madison County (Jeff nomination), Ragtime, Marriott Theatre; Pacific Overtures, Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Dreamgirls, Milwaukee Repertory Theater; and 1776, Milwaukee Opera Theatre. Concert appearances include Candide, Carnegie Hall; West Side Story, Bernstein’s Mass (Deutsche Grammophon), Philadelphia Orchestra; Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; Lyrics and Lyricists, 92Y; the Weill Music Institute’s Link Up with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s; and Elgin Symphony (Naxos). He is a Ten Chimneys Fellow and graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. nathanielstampley.com

Jorell Williams (Hector/Priest) is an American operatic baritone with a wide variety of experience from standard repertoire to premiere pieces. Praised for his “magnificent, rich-toned” baritone (The New York Times), Williams begins the 2018–19 season with a return to Victory Hall Opera in the role of Mr. Gobineau in Gian Carlo Menotti’s The Medium, and reprises the role of Hannah-Before in a co-production of Laura Kaminsky’s critically acclaimed chamber opera As One with American Opera Projects and New York City Opera at Merkin Hall. He will also join
the Brooklyn Art Song Society for Aaron Copland’s *Old American Songs* and the world premiere of David Ludwig’s *Songs from the Bleeding Pine*.

**Camellia Koo** (Set Designer) is a Toronto-based set and costume designer for theater, opera, dance, and site-specific performance installations. Recent designs for opera include *Marilyn Forever* (Aventa Ensemble), *Les contes d’Hoffmann* (Edmonton Opera), *Maria Stuarda* (Pacific Opera Victoria), *The Lighthouse* (Boston Lyric Opera), *The Turn of the Screw* and *La bohème* (Against the Grain), *Dido and Aeneas* (Opera on the Avalon), *Don Giovanni* (University of Toronto), *Giiwedin* (Native Earth), and *The Shadow* (Tapestry New Opera). She was associate designer on productions of *The Magic Flute* (Budapest State Opera) and *Candide* (ENO/Châtelet/Hyogo PAC, Japan) for designer Michael Levine. Recent designs for theater include collaborations with numerous midsize to regional theater companies including Tarragon Theatre, Young People’s Theatre, The Second City (Toronto and Chicago), Soulpepper Theatre Company, and six seasons at the Shaw Festival. She is a graduate of Ryerson University and completed her MA in Scenography at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (UK) and the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten (Utrecht, The Netherlands). She is also an alumna of the Lincoln Center Theater’s Director’s Lab. Upcoming plans include designs for *Albert Herring* (University of Toronto), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Against the Grain), *The Sea* (Shaw Festival), and *A God in Need of Help* (Tarragon Theatre).

**Oana Botez** (Costume Designer) is an international set/costume designer for film, theater, opera, and dance. She is a Princess Grace recipient and NEA/TCG Career Development Program recipient, has received the Barrymore Award and the Drammy Award, and was nominated for the Henry Hewes Design Award. Her designs have raised critical acclaim in New York’s BAM Next Wave, Bard SummerScape/Richard B. Fisher Center, Baryshnikov Arts Center, the David H. Koch Theater/Lincoln Center, Big Apple Circus/Lincoln Center, and Classic Stage Company. Regional credits include the Wilma Theater, Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, Hartford Stage Company, Long Wharf, Shakespeare Theatre Company (DC), Berkeley Rep ArtsEmerson, Broad Stage, MCA (Chicago, IL), ODC (San Francisco), the Walker Arts Center, Peak Performances, Lumberyard, Academy of Music, Old Globe Theatre, Curtis Institute of Music, and Cutler Majestic Theatre. Internationally, Botez has worked in Romania (Bucharest National Theatre,
Arad National Theatre), France (Théâtre National de Chaillot, Les Subsistances, Le Quartz), Turkey (International Festival of Contemporary Theater), Peru, Germany, Italy, Singapore, and United Kingdom. She has been teaching costume design at MIT. oanabotez.com

**Devorah Kengmana** (Lighting Designer) is a New York City–based lighting and projections designer. She holds an SB in Theatre Technology from MIT and an MFA in Lighting Design from University of Missouri-Kansas City. She has worked at the San Francisco Opera and was named the 2016 Lighting Design Fellow at Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She has assisted designers such as Jane Cox, Christopher Akerlind, Victor En Yu Tan, Japhy Weideman, Yi Zhao, Jake DeGroot, Rocco DiSanti, Oona Curley, and Alan Edwards. Her designs include *The Niceties* (Portland Stage Company), *OPIUM* (Spiegelworld Productions, Associate LD), *The Mecca Tales* (Voyage Theater Company, Crossroads Theatre Company), *Beyond the Oak Trees* (Crossroads Theatre Company, World Premiere), *A Christmas Carol* (Merrimack Repertory Theatre), *The Convert* (Central Square Theater), *Nectar* (Axial Theatre Company), *Clybourne Park* (Unicorn Theatre), and *Journey’s End* (Kansas City Actors’ Theatre).

**Sam Lerner** and **Brian Walters** (Sound Designers) previously worked together at the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) in Cambridge, MA, where Lerner remains the manager of the Sound Department. Walters is currently the head of audio on the Broadway production of *Waitress*. Notable shows on which they collaborated during their time at A.R.T. include *Waitress; Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812;* and *Finding Neverland*. Lerner’s recent sound design work includes *In the Body of the World* (MTC Stage I) and *Crossing: An American Opera* (BAM Howard Gilman Opera House).

**Dave Bova** (Hair, Wig, and Makeup Designer) Broadway designs include *M. Butterfly, Sunset Boulevard, Bandstand, Indecent, The Real Thing,* and *Violet*. Off-Broadway designs include *Be More Chill, Jerry Springer: The Opera, Little Miss Sunshine, Here Lies Love, Buried Child, Pericles, Booty Candy, My Name Is Asher Lev, The Good Person of Szechwan,* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Bova has worked at Steppenwolf Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Signature Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Dallas Theater Center, Shakespeare Theatre of DC, Ford’s
davebovadesign.com

Arnold J. Mungioli, CSA, (Casting) is delighted to be working with this esteemed Creative Team. He previously worked for Peak Performances on Robert Wilson’s Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter and Liz Lerman’s Healing War. Shows in development include The Wanderer, A Walk on the Moon, and Open Road. Other credits include Bill T. Jones’s Fela; Disney’s High School Musical, The Lion King, and Aladdin; Hal Prince/Susan Stroman’s Show Boat; Ragtime; Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat with Donny Osmond; Sunset Boulevard with Diahann Carroll; Hal Prince/Rob Marshall’s Kiss of the Spiderwoman with Chita Rivera/Vanessa Williams; Candide; Little House on the Prairie starring Melissa Gilbert; 12.14 Foundation’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream; Trinity Rep; Actors Theatre of Louisville; Cleveland Playhouse; PCLO; and North Shore Music Theatre. Mungioli has received two Artios Awards and a CSA Media Access Award.
www.mungiolitheatricals.com

John Miller (Music Coordinator) has worked on more than 120 Broadway shows, including Summer: The Donna Summer Musical; Gettin’ the Band Back Together; Beautiful: The Carole King Musical; Waitress; A Bronx Tale; Jersey Boys; Smokey Joe’s Café; Once on this Island; Hello Dolly; Rock of Ages; Miss Saigon; Charlie and the Chocolate Factory; Indecent; Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812; Something Rotten; Les Misérables; Pippin; Once; Newsies; Elf; Jesus Christ Superstar; Leap of Faith; On a Clear Day; Godspell; Follies; Porgy and Bess; Priscilla; Sister Act; Catch Me if You Can; Hairspray; Young Frankenstein; and The Producers. He has performed as a studio musician (bass) for Michael Jackson; Madonna; Peter, Paul and Mary; Eric Clapton; Carly Simon; Pete Seeger; the New York Philharmonic; Leonard Cohen; Bette Midler; BB King; Mose Allison; Portishead; Billy Joel; Bob Dylan; Celine Dion; and Smashing Pumpkins. johnmillerbass.com

Julia Bumke (Dramaturg/Assistant Director) is a new-work dramaturg who is passionate about fostering composers, librettists, and playwrights at all stages of
their careers. She has collaborated on premieres and workshops with Opera Philadelphia, Lincoln Center Theater, the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, Music-Theatre Group, the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.), and the John Duffy Institute for New Opera, among others. Recent world-premiere dramaturgy includes David Hertzberg’s *The Wake World* (Opera Philadelphia; winner, Best New Opera, Music Critics Association of North America); Kristin Kuster and Megan Levad’s *Kept* (Virginia Arts Festival/M.T.G.); and Matthew Aucoin’s *Crossing* (A.R.T., BAM Next Wave). She is the director of education at PlayPenn, where she curates playwriting training and opportunities for writers at all levels. She holds an MFA in Dramaturgy from A.R.T. Institute at Harvard and an AB from Princeton University.

**Jessica L. Halem** (Production Stage Manager) is thrilled to be a part of Montclair’s Peak Performances season and to be working with this company on *Hatuey: Memory of Fire*. New York City credits include *Sleep No More, The Lost Supper,* and *Flight* at the McKittrick Hotel, and Edward Albee’s *At Home at the Zoo* at Signature Theatre Company. She previously had the pleasure of serving as a stage manager for La Musica Lirica, an opera conservatory program based in Novafeltria, Italy. Halem is proud to be a new member of Actors’ Equity Association.

**Michael Posnick** (Co-Producer) is Professor Emeritus, Manhattanville College, and adjunct professor at the Hunter College Theatre Department. He taught and directed at Yale, Hunter College, National Theatre Institute, O’Neill Theatre Center, and 25 years with the National Theatre of the Deaf. He served as artistic director of the Mosaic Theatre at the 92nd Street Y and directed theatrical and musical productions at Manhattan Theatre Club, Yale Repertory Theatre, the 92nd Street Y, Carnegie Hall, and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. He served as theater consultant for the National Foundation for Jewish Culture and Melton Center of the Jewish Theological Seminary. He was co-editor of *Nine Contemporary Jewish Plays*. Posnick holds an MFA from Yale Drama School. He is on faculty at the School of Practical Philosophy. He is married to Eileen Penn Posnick, daughter of Asher Penn, author of the Yiddish poem *Hatuey*. 
About the Company

Music-Theatre Group (MTG) (Diane Wondisford, Producing Director) is dedicated to helping artists turn creative inspiration into dramatically compelling works of art. MTG has created collaborations among composer, poets, writers, directors, choreographers, designers, and performers, working with them from the beginning and throughout the life of their projects to develop and produce thought-provoking works of music-theatre that blur the boundaries among music/theatre/opera. Seminal works include Crossing by Matthew Aucoin, Diane Paulus (dir.); Dark Sisters by Nico Muhly and Stephen Karam, Rebecca Taichman (dir.); Death and the Powers by Tod Machover, Robert Pinsky, Randy Weiner, Diane Paulus (dir.); Arjuna’s Dilemma by Douglas Cuomo, Robin Guarino (dir.); Running Man by Diedre Murray, Cornelius Eady, Diane Paulus (dir.); Marco Polo by Tan Dun and Paul Griffiths, Martha Clarke (dir.); Juan Darien by Julie Taymor and Elliot Goldenthal; Eve Ensler’s Extraordinary Measures, William Harper (music); M. Clarke’s Garden of Earthly Delights and Vienna: Lusthaus, Richard Peaslee (music), text by Charles Mee; and Dr. Selavy’s Magic Theatre by Stanley Silverman and Richard Foreman. MTG has collaborated with Opera Philadelphia and its Composer in Residence program, featuring Lembit Beecher, Missy Mazzoli, David Little, Andrew Norman, David Hertzberg, and Rene Orth. Recently The Nefarious, Immoral, but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Mr. Burke & Mr. Hare by Julian Grant and Mark Campbell, David Schweizer (dir.), commissioned and developed by MTG and produced by Boston Lyric Opera in November, 2017, was nominated for an International Opera Award for Best World Premiere. MTG artists and their works have been recognized with MacArthur Fellowships, OBIE Awards, and Tony nominations and as finalists for the Pulitzer Prize. We are deeply grateful to our partners in development: Sundance Theatre Institute, Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene, Opera de la Calle, and Peak Performances for the significant contributions they made to bring Hatuey to the stage.
Acknowledgements

Our deepest gratitude to: Shane Baker, Ruth Behar, Jack Burkhalter, Prof. Katya Caso, Larry Chanin, Linda Chapman, Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas, The Pocantico Center, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; Jorge Estevez, Kimberly Grigsby, Kelly Anne Hanrahan, Hermitage Artists’ Retreat, Dr. Judith K. Lang Hilgartner, Ana Maria Jomolco y sus padres, Joe “Yosl” Kurland, Irka Mateo, John McAuliff, Fund for Reconciliation & Development; Zalmen Mlotek, Motl Didner, Chris Massimine, and all at the NYT-Folksbiene; Johnny Moreno, Maria Christina Olivieras, Rabbi James Ponet, Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale University; Jose Antonio Prades Hung, Lidia Ramirez, Moishe Rosenfeld, Salome, Gil Sperling, Leigh Silverman, Bonnie Sue Stein & GOH Productions; Andy Teirstein, Dr. Deborah Kapchan, and all at NYU’s Translucent Borders; Bill Feinstein, Sam Feder, Rachel Cowan, the Stern Family, Jack Klebanow.

Staff

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming
Executive Director Jedediah Wheeler
Executive Producer Jill Dombrowski
Business Manager Stephanie Haggerstone
Production/Facility Manager J. Ryan Graves
Media and Marketing Director Amy Estes
Director of Audience Services Robert Hermida
Program Administrator Brett Wellman Messenger
Technical Director Colin Van Horn
Master Stage Electrician Andrew R. Wilsey
Box Office Manager Jeffrey Wingfield
House Manager Maureen Grimaldi
Graphics Patrick Flood/Flood Design
Press Blake Zidell & Associates
Program Editor Susan R. Case
Program Design Bart Solenthaler/Bart&Co.
Production Run Crew Stephanie Benjamin, Vici Chirumbolo, Marc Critelli, Nick Hawrylko, Christopher Ollo, Kimberly O’Loughlin, Benjamin Weill
The Office of Arts + Cultural Programming (ACP) enhances the cultural, creative, and academic life of the Montclair State campus and the broader community. Its signature program, Peak Performances, features innovative works by international contemporary artists of exceptional merit, and by the next generation of great artists training at Montclair State University’s College of the Arts. Through its Cultural Engagement program, ACP offers master classes, workshops, lectures, and discussions designed to deepen participants’ understanding of the aesthetic, cultural, and social contexts of the performances presented.

ACP gratefully acknowledges our student staff and volunteers:
Assistant House Managers William Collins, Adriana Guerrero
Box Office Representatives Alexis Amore, Jamie Bacher, Jose Baez, Peace Biyibioku, Mechi Brown, Nicole Casey, Noelle Florio, Ameer Gonzalez, Jonathan Johnson, Kaitlyn Karlstein, Tashae Udo, Cierra Williams
Ushers JoshiKa Andersson, Carlos Andrade, Jamie Bacher, Ariadna Camayo, Zsaira Davis, Andrew DeSisto, Yarixa German, Patzy Gutierrez, Azariah Johnson, Jonathan Johnson, Ivy Meyer, Joseph Respicio, Angela Rosado, Steven Ruiz, Madalyn Rupprecht, Therese Sheridan, MaryRose Spinella, Journie Zarate
Programs in this season are made possible in part by funds from:

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

FACE Contemporary Theater, a program developed by FACE Foundation and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States

Peak Patrons: Joanna Conrad, Alyce Dissette, Susan Satz

To view our complete season and for more information, visit peakperfs.org.

Find us on  

Facebook  

Twitter @peakperfs  

Instagram @peakperfs