University of Florida Opera Theatre, Symphony Orchestra and University of Florida Performing Arts present

The Red Silk Thread
An Epic Tale of Marco Polo

Thursday, April 17, 2014, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 19, 2014, 7:30 p.m.
Phillips Center
The Red Silk Thread:
An Epic Tale of Marco Polo

MUSIC BY STELLA SUNG
LIBRETTO BY ERNEST HILBERT

World Premiere, Gainesville, Florida, April 17, 2014
Sung in English with Supertitles

Cast

Marco Polo ................................................................. Matt Morgan
Princess Cocachin ...................................................... Hein Jung
Kublai Khan ............................................................... Thomas Potter
Uncle Maffeo ............................................................. Anthony Offerle
Saran ................................................................. Alexandra Flinn-Vivas
Empress Nambui ....................................................... Hannah Hough
Empress Chabi .......................................................... Jamey Wright
Empress Tegulen ........................................................ Clary Román
Yanira ................................................................. Rachel Beal
Captain Ganbaatar .................................................. Jonathan Gravely
Prince Ghazan/Marco Polo (understudy) ........................ Erick Crow
Caspar ................................................................. Dale Houston Brumfield
Rustichello .............................................................. Weijia (Gina) Yang
Solo Dancer .............................................................. Urtnasan Gantulga
Court Musician ....................................................... Mathew Ruff
Genoese Prison Guard ............................................. Kenrick Watkins
Princess Cocachin (understudy) ................................. Caroline Fjeldheim

On Stage
Kahn’s Court, Sailors, Japanese Wokou Pirates

Soprano
Rachael Cain
Chelsea Mattson
Jasmine Robinson
Erica Scaglione
Lynnea Rhodes
Kasie Wagner

Tenor
Brandon Good
Anthony Lupi
Charles May
Dean Thomason
Daniel Womack

Mezzo Soprano
Savannah Green
Samantha Gresham
Emily Lewis
Yael Reich
Rachael Cain

Bass
David Leppert
Kyle Gray
Kevin Lozano
Matthew Ruff

Dancers (Japanese Wokou Pirates)
Jerel Hercules, Dean Thomason, David Leppert, Tony Lupi,
Daniel Morimoto, Matthew Ruff, Daniel Womack

The University of Florida Concert Choir
Dr. Will Kesling, Conductor and Director of Choral Activities
Off-Stage Chorus

Soprano I
Caroline Fjeldheim
Ciara de Leon
Erica Scaglione
Jacquelyn Vondette
Kelli White
Erica Williams
Jamey Wright

Tenor I
Clemente Cuevas
Erick Crow
Brandon Good
Phillip Grow
Diego Rojas
Dean Thomason

Soprano II
Rachael Cain
Allison Gilland
Vanelle Jasmin
Chelsea Mattson
Samantha O’Brien
Caitleen Pease
Kasie Wagner
Shelby Young
Sravya Kidambi

Tenor II
John Payne
Justin Roland
Sam Silverberg
Peter Bushnell
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alto I</th>
<th>Bass I</th>
<th>Alto II</th>
<th>Bass II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nashka Desrosiers</td>
<td>Johnny Bosse</td>
<td>Rachel Beal</td>
<td>Joyner Atiles-Lopez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah Hough</td>
<td>Robert Bukovic</td>
<td>Chelsea Brinda</td>
<td>Dale Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leanna Peters</td>
<td>Nathan Evans</td>
<td>Katherine Gutierrez</td>
<td>Brumfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamara Rossario-Cardona</td>
<td>Sean Hoolihan</td>
<td>Elizabeth Keenan</td>
<td>Ross Cawthon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsey Tran</td>
<td>Kevin Lozano</td>
<td>Nate Pence</td>
<td>Kyle Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylie Lowe</td>
<td>Joshua Mazur</td>
<td>Lauren Richard</td>
<td>Kenny Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Castillow</td>
<td>David Pelino</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kenrick Watkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ari Sharfstein</td>
<td>Seth Rowe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Timothy Williams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Setting: 13th-Century Imperial China, East China Sea, Persia, Genoa, Gobi Desert

**Act I**

**Scene 1**

The Grand Throne Room of Kublai Khan

**Scene 2**

Palace Gardens

---

**Act II**

**Scene 1**

At sea on board Khan's flagship

**Scene 2**

Persian Court of King Arghun the Magnificent and Prince Ghazan

**Scene 3**

A Genoese Prison Cell

The Gobi Desert
Synopsis

Act I

Scene 1

The first act begins with the famous Venetian traveler Marco Polo returning to the court of his patron, the Great Kublai Khan, after a diplomatic journey. A lavish celebration is underway. Khan’s daughter, the beautiful young Princess Cocachin, has been promised in marriage to the cruel King Arghun of Persia in order to quell the threat of looming war and reopen the profitable but oftentimes dangerous trade route from Persia to China. Marco Polo and the unhappy teenaged princess find themselves mysteriously drawn to each other. The princess’s lady-in-waiting, Saran, senses trouble and vows to keep the two apart until they leave for Persia. During the celebration, the superstitious Khan’s favorite soothsayer delivers a worrying prophecy about the princess’s future, but the emperor, in a contented mood, chooses to dismiss it.

Scene 2

During a secret rendezvous the next day in the palace garden, Marco and the princess come to realize that their forbidden love is hazardous not only to themselves but to the future of Great Khan’s empire. Marco Polo pledges to set off at once on a new journey and forget the princess forever, but he is waylaid by the emperor, who announces he has chosen Marco Polo, the only man he truly trusts, to escort the princess across perilous seas and deserts to the court of the dreaded King of Persia.

Act II

Scene 1

In the second act, we find Marco Polo in command of a fleet of Imperial War junks carrying the princess to Persia. She has chosen to remain below deck during the passage. Captain Ganbaatar warns of the threat of Wokou, rapacious Japanese pirates, but Marco Polo, preoccupied with thoughts of the princess, ignores the warning. That night, by the light of a full moon, Marco restlessly paces the decks alone. Princess Cocachin, also believing she is alone, emerges from her cabin to sing to the moon. They meet and wonder why they cannot be together. The princess gives Marco Polo a cloth into which she has woven a red silk thread, promising that, according to a Chinese proverb, whatever happens, the invisible “red thread of fate” will always connect them. They are surprised by Saran, who sends the princess back to her cabin. Saran tells the sad story of her own youthful love gone dreadfully wrong. She explains again why the two must remain apart. After she leaves, Marco Polo sings his own plaintive song to the moon, wondering who he really is after all these years. Before he can finish, alarms are sounded as Wokou swarm the junk. Marco Polo leaps into a ferocious sword battle with the pirates. He must decide if he will risk his life against impossible odds to rescue the princess as pirates carry her back to their ship.

Scene 2

As the adventure continues, we find Marco Polo’s Uncle Maffeo arriving before the rest of the expedition in the Persian court only to find it empty. He imagines himself a king for a day, but then begins to suspect that something is amiss after happening upon the Persian King’s attendant Caspar, who frantically prepares for the wedding. When Marco and the princess arrive, it is obvious to all that they have grown dangerously close. They are introduced to King Arghun’s dashing and charismatic son Prince Ghazan, who charms the delegation, including the princess. Princess Cocachin trembles at the thought of the impending marriage, but sudden news arrives that the old King Arghun has died. Marco rejoices only to discover that the wedding will proceed with Prince Ghazan, who by rights will become the new king and bring peace to the warring kingdoms. Marco Polo, jealous and protective, begins to argue with Prince Ghazan. Sensing the danger and realizing her fate, Princess Cocachin assumes control over her life for the first time, separating the men and explaining to Marco Polo that their love could never be and that she has decided to fulfill her destiny by marrying the prince and becoming a queen.
Scene 3

In the final scene, Marco Polo finds himself a prisoner of war in a Genoese prison cell with the writer Rustichello, to whom he relates his wondrous travels, leaving out only the story of his lost love for the princess. Upon being freed from captivity, Marco Polo is given a letter from the Persian court announcing that the princess has been poisoned. The most painful memory of his long life rushes back and Marco finds himself transported to a desert, where he encounters a vision of the princess. Still connected by the red thread, they sing to each other one last time.

— Ernest Hilbert (2014)

Background

*Ye emperors, kings, dukes, marquises, earls, and knights, and all other people desirous of knowing the diversities of the races of mankind, as well as the diversities of kingdoms, provinces, and regions of all parts of the East, read through this book ...*

Thus begins Marco Polo's *Le Devisement du monde* (Description of the World), or, more commonly, his *Travels*, one of the most famous books of all time. When the world's greatest traveler set out from his home in Venice in 1271, a “young stripling” aged only 17, Europe had nothing resembling what we know of as opera, which would only emerge around 1600 (Jacopo Peri's opera *Dafne* was performed in Florence in 1598, the earliest known opera; the libretto survives, though the music is almost entirely lost), nor could it boast of a civilization as advanced and organized as that of the Chinese kingdoms ruled by the Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty from 1279 until 1360. With his father Niccolo and Uncle Maffeo, Marco Polo set out on well-worn trade routes to kingdoms east, most governed by the Mongols in the wake of Genghis Khan's world conquest. It was an age before modern science cast light across the globe, so we must remember that Marco Polo's was a world populated by bizarre peoples, traversed by monsters, and lit by the glow of magic. In a very real sense, his world was one perfectly suited to opera.

Opera, too, is strange. It is magical. It always has been. It creates a universe in which everyone sings all the time, and anything is possible. Dr. Samuel Johnson dubbed it in *Prefaces, Biological and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets* an “exotic and irrational entertainment.” When writing an opera based on a particular historical moment, the imagination is naturally drawn to the grey or dark areas, to things left out, events behind closed doors, so to speak, the intimate connections lost to history. The history of Marco Polo's stay in the court of Kublai Khan is particularly murky. Nonetheless, the broad contours of Marco Polo's travels, his time in China, and return trip, as recounted in his celebrated book, are considered largely historical. Most importantly for *The Red Silk Thread*, the *Travels* includes a grueling sea voyage to Persia and from thence overland back to Venice, where Marco Polo arrived with a fortune in jewels sewn into his garments.

Stella Sung and I chose to color the larger shapes provided by the story of Marco Polo’s return journey, introducing perfectly plausible action that is simply impossible to prove or disprove. We teased the mythical from the historical, or, more precisely, from the wooly edges of historical fabric, where it frays and comes loose. Stella and I pondered what would happen if a cosmopolitan traveler, what we call a man of the world, accustomed to profitable commercial schemes, were to find himself, at midlife, suddenly yearning for something he absolutely could not have, to go to a place he could not go. Would he risk his own comfort and well-being, possibly his own life, to seize an object of overwhelming desire? And what of a princess daughter of the Great Kublai Khan, sheltered her entire life in a magnificent palace, treated with godlike reverence and guarded as a great prize? How would she feel if she discovered she was to be sent away to marry a strange and frightening monarch in order to finalize one of her father’s treaties? And what would be her reaction to the presence of a charismatic, confident, almost heroic man from another continent, who told pleasing stories of his exploits and discoveries?

A young princess of the Yuan dynasty would have met envoys, scientists, and artisans from many places. She would surely have been intrigued by the locales from which they hailed. Perhaps she
would have liked to travel to those places herself. We were careful not to envision Marco Polo as a warrior, though he certainly has a cavalier’s swagger and may well have worn a sword. Likewise, we did not want the Princess Cocachin to be merely a demure and submissive maiden. Though we are working with characters that would not be out of place in an opera of past centuries, we wanted the characters to feel entirely modern and to imbue them with fraught emotional states and complex motivations. We feel The Red Silk Thread is a thoroughly contemporary treatment of a distant historical moment, by turns amusing, provocative, and beautiful, a multidimensional tale of duty, love, and destiny, brought to life for the twenty-first century.

— Ernest Hilbert, Librettist, The Red Silk Thread

Message from the Dean

Welcome to the world premiere performance of The Red Silk Thread: An Epic Tale of Marco Polo. This passionate opera is the creation of UF Distinguished Alumna Dr. Stella Sung, a Pegasus Professor at the University of Central Florida, and librettist and national poet Ernest Hilbert. The plot’s love story combines musical drama, dance and 3-D digital technology for an unforgettable effect. Directed by renowned New York stage director Beth Greenberg, The Red Silk Thread features an ensemble cast of professional artists and performers from UF Opera Theatre, directed by Dr. Anthony Offerle, and the UF Symphony Orchestra, led by maestro Raymond Chobaz. Dancers from the School of Theatre + Dance and the UF Concert Choir will join the cast to bring this tale to life.

Producing a new opera is the culmination of years of creative collaboration. This artistic teamwork is comparable to any major production. Think Super Bowl. We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to all of those involved in the making of The Red Silk Thread. Unique to this opera is the set design. Ninjaneer Studios from Orlando has developed immersive projections using 3-D mapping, to create virtual sets and animation. These digitally projected images will transport us to the legendary court of the Great Kublai Khan. In addition to the outstanding cast please peruse the program to read about the full artistic team and the staff at the Phillips Center under the direction of Director Michael Blachly. We are also grateful for the grant support from VisitGainesville, the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs Culture Builds Florida’s Future and a host of sponsors, which aided us in bringing this world-class experience to the University of Florida campus and Gainesville area residents. Additionally, we are thrilled to have donor support providing the opportunity to host a special student performance of The Red Silk Thread to introduce the next generation to the beauty of the opera.

As the university strides into the top 10 public research institutions, we at the College of Fine Arts remain dedicated to providing cultural resources and programs on campus and beyond that help feed the creativity required for innovation, entrepreneurship and success. We invite you to join us throughout the year for visual arts exhibits, musical performances and theatre and dance productions on campus and throughout the community.

On behalf of the College of Fine Arts, School of Music and School of Theatre and Dance, I hope you enjoy tonight’s show and continue to take part in the abundant cultural offerings available at the University of Florida.

Sincerely,
Lucinda Lavelli
Dean, College of Fine Arts
Notes from the Composer

I remember turning on the radio when I was about 12 years old, and hearing for the first time Puccini’s *La Bohème*, which was being broadcast by what was then known as the “Texaco Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts.” I never dreamed then that I would be writing an opera!

*The Red Silk Thread* is my first opera. I began crafting the story in December of 2011, and contacted librettist and poet Ernest Hilbert in the early spring of 2012. We began working intensely, and after nine months, we completed a full-length opera. Two complete public workshop performances (using piano accompaniment) were presented at the University of Michigan in April of 2013, directed by Robert Swedberg.

During the spring of 2012, discussions about producing *The Red Silk Thread* at the University of Florida took place, and it was decided that UF would produce the official world premiere of the work.

For the remainder of the program notes, I would like to share some of the thoughts that I have written in a journal that I have kept during the process of writing this opera. Here are some excerpts:

**February 2, 2012**

I am reading the Laurence Bergreen book on Marco Polo, and it is quite fascinating to me. The historical accounts, coupled with the writings of Marco Polo (or rather, those of Rustichello who took down the narrative) paint a most interesting account of life in the times; Mongol and Chinese ... my story of Marco Polo could actually be plausible ... it could have happened that Marco Polo and the Princess Cocachin could have found themselves attracted to each other. And for example, I have her returning to him as if in a dream at the end of the story—and in reading today that Cocachin wept bitterly when the Polos departed Persia, and that she soon died after their departure, it seems entirely fitting that she should return in a dream—and that their FATE was always what it was meant to be.

**February 24, 2012**

I have finished the Bergreen book ... I have a better understanding of the history and the ways of life of the people of these countries. Thousands of years of basically warrior states, nomadic and tribal life—these are the roots of the culture. I can well imagine that Marco Polo's tales were not only fascinating but also tantalizing for his readers and listeners. And well it would be that the Venetians would be full of disbelief! Unfathomable to them the tales would seem; the “singing sands,” the exotic customs, the ruthless warriors, the sexual rituals and customs. Yet we know now that much that he said was true, if even elaborated and embellished ... reading and research is giving me impressions, thoughts, ideas, etc., which I think will help me to “set the stage” in my mind about the characters, and thus, the music. Imagination being key to the process. I think that all that I read as description will formulate itself—manifest itself—in some way as I work out the music.

**November 8, 2012**

I arrived at an “ending” for the opera so now I have a beginning, middle, and end. It almost seems unbelievable that I have actually come this far! Through many months of continual work, day in and day out never stopping to really rest, has been like training for a marathon, I suppose! The work with Ernie has been extraordinary. It is as though we were fated to do this work.

**January 20, 2013**

As I was swimming this morning, I suddenly realized that I am missing a solo aria for Cocachin! I felt that something was still missing from the opera, but could not pinpoint it until suddenly ... bam! It hit me—Cocachin has no big solo aria.

**April 13, 2013**

My tech team (Ninjaneer Studios) was also wonderful and did their work with absolute dedication and preparedness. Heather and Chris DROVE from Florida to Michigan, just so that they could have their own equipment to work on changes.
October 23, 2013

I wonder what the future of RST will be ... will it sit on the shelf, will it go on to the bigger opera houses? Will it succeed or flop? I guess I really have to wait and see each day seems to bring something to think about ... but, I am SO lucky to be able to do this work—I could be digging ditches. I am truly one of the lucky few composers. While I work hard, I have had good fortune. May I always be grateful. May I always serve the Art.

December 3, 2013

Just the other day, I was watching Sinbad on TV and then realized that we had not included jewels for the treasure chest (seeing the treasure chests in Sinbad reminded me of this!). So everything I see and think about right now has some correlation to the opera.

February 4, 2014

Today I completed all the assembly of the parts; printed and sorted out so that each act has the necessary parts. Now I will deliver all these parts in a box and then the librarian of the orchestra has the tedious task of enlarging and Xeroxing the parts and placing them in the folders—plus someone will need to bow the parts for the strings.

But now, the scores are done and the parts are done and so essentially, my work as the composer (for now) is done. It’s hard to believe that I’ve actually reached this point. It was SUCH tedious work to extract and work on the parts and then spend a couple of weeks printing them out. Many ink cartridges and a lot of paper!


And so, we finally reach opening night! Doing this opera has truly been “a labor of love” not only for myself, but also for the many team members whose time and talents have made this production possible. I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their support, love and patience. It truly “takes a village to raise an opera,” and I am deeply indebted to all who have made this production possible.

— Stella Sung
Production Staff

Stage Director .................................................................................. Dr. Beth Greenberg
Director of Opera ........................................................................... Dr. Anthony Offerle
Conductor/Director of Orchestra .................................................. Dr. Raymond Chobaz
Chorus Master/Director, UF Concert Choir .................................. Dr. Will Kesling
Lighting Designer ........................................................................... Todd Bedell
Choreographers ............................................................................... Judy Skinner, Weijia (Gina) Yang
Fight Choreography ....................................................................... Ric Rose
Stage Manager ................................................................................ Austin Gresham
Costume Manager .......................................................................... Michelle Benoit
Musical Director .............................................................................. Anthony Offerle
Assistant Musical Director ............................................................... Joshua Mazur
Assistant Stage Manager ................................................................ Patricia Kee
Head Costume Assistant ................................................................. Erica Williams
Production Assistants ...................................................................... Meghan Clancy, Kelsey Nickerson
Répétiteur ....................................................................................... Brian Hargrove
Répétiteur ....................................................................................... Roc Palčič
Virtual Set Design ........................................................................... Ninjaneer Studios, Orlando, FL
Director .......................................................................................... Joe Rosa
Artistic Director ............................................................................. Heather Knott
Technical Director .......................................................................... Chris Brown
3D Generalist .................................................................................. David Gian-Cursio
3D Generalist .................................................................................. Matt Mann
3D Generalist .................................................................................. Brian Sawyer
Animator and Illustrator ................................................................. Ryan Bregenzer
Illustrator ........................................................................................ Ward Silverman
Projectors ........................................................................................ Onstage, Orlando, FL
Prop Master ..................................................................................... Phillip Grow
Superstitles Provided By ................................................................. Stella Sung
Supertitles Operation ........................................................................ Cole Lundquist
Poster Art Design ........................................................................... Holly Franklin
PR/Marketing ................................................................................... Leah Craig
Development .................................................................................... Jennifer Coolidge
Marketing Graduate Assistant ...................................................... Alexandra Flinn-Vivas
Program Designer ........................................................................... Joe Osburn
Documentary Film Production
Director ............................................................................................ Lisa Mills
Film Editor ........................................................................................ Tim Brown
Director of Photography ................................................................. Jonathan Bowen
Production Assistant ....................................................................... Chris Delis
Camera Operators ............................................................................. Andrew Cadieux, Pete Delis, Orlando Porro, Robert Schweitzer

Special Thanks

Alachua County Public Schools
Aaron Bailey Photography
Dr. Michael Blachly, Director, UF Performing Arts
College of Fine Arts Staff
Jennifer Coolidge
Matthew Koropeckyj Cox
Dance Alive National Ballet
Digital Worlds Institute
Jason Degan
Richard Drake
Lisa Eash
Jennifer Ford
Holly Franklin
Debbie Gallagher
Phillip Grow
The Harn Museum of Art
Alexa Henderson
Dana Hill
Lucinda Lavelli, Dean, College of Fine Arts
Roslyn and Norman Levy
Victoria Masters
Dr. Margaret Mertz
Barbara Mitola
Natalie Morrison

Onstage, “your source for live event production”
Dr. Jacqueline Orlando
James Oliverio
Pofahl Dance Studios
Regal Cinemas Butler Plaza
Regal Cinemas, Ocala, FL
Joe Rosa
Eric Ross
Eric Segal
Irene Silverman, CBS4
Judy Skinner
Target Copy
George Trucano
Kim Tuttle
UF Purchasing and Licensing
University of Florida Performing Arts
UFPA Staff
Shane Van Deree
Jessica Ward
WJUF-FM
WUFT-FM

Ninjaneer Studios, Orlando, FL
Ryan Bregenzer, Chris Brown, Heather Knott, David Gian-Cursio, Joe Rosa
UF School of Music Faculty and Staff

Dr. John Duff, Director
Prof. Ron Burrlichter
Dr. Raymond Chobaz
Dr. Will Kesling

Dr. Elizabeth Graham
Matt Morgan
Dr. Charles Pickeral
Dr. Brenda Smith

UF School of Theatre and Dance Faculty and Staff

Dr. Jerry Dickey, Director
Todd Bedell
Tony Berry
Costume Shop Staff
Stacey Galloway

Zak Herring
Richard Rose
Tony Mata, Director, Musical Theatre
Scene Shop Staff

Sponsors

The Red Silk Thread: An Epic Tale of Marco Polo
is made possible through the generous support of our patrons.

Khan Patrons
Charles P. Steinmetz
Anonymous
VisitGainesville

Marco Polo Patrons
Cherie and Jack Fine, Fine, Farkash & Parlapiano, P.A.
Bailey Estates
Anonymous

Cocachin Patrons
Dr. and Mrs. Nicholas Bodor
The Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs
Dr. and Mrs. Leonard and Seline Dreifus
John and Margaret Sung

Prince Ghazan Patrons
Continuum Properties
Dr. Jacqueline Orlando

Saran Patrons
Judy Duda
Ena Flinn
Dr. Mary Palmer, Mary Palmer and Associates

Maffeo Patrons
Napolatano’s Restaurant
Foundation for the Promotion of Music

Produced by the UF College of Fine Arts
with partnership from University of Florida Performing Arts

Special appreciation is extended to:
UF College of Fine Arts Dean, Lucinda Lavelli
UF School of Music Director, Dr. John Duff
UF Performing Arts Director, Michael Blachly
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Raymond Chobaz, Music Director and Conductor
Ethan Miller, Orchestra Manager
Will Teegarden, President
Elise Jimenez, Vice-President
Michelle Catchur, Secretary

VIOLIN
Marina Tucker, Concertmaster
Yeeun Yoo, Assistant Concertmaster
Leisa Miller, Principal
Philip Martin, Assistant Principal
Megan Autrey
Michelle Catchur
Christopher Charters
Emily Cochrane
Kaitlin Greer
Amir Hadjimiry
Tara Hempstead
Ely Levine
Melissa LiKamWa
Alicia Matos
Trevor Owens
Padmini Persaud
Brenda Rieger
Rachelle Strang
Kirk Walker Jr.
Alexandria Warwick
Al Zhang

VIOLA
Jeremiah Gadway, Principal
Hannah Lee, Assistant Principal
José Cotayo
Kevin Espinet
Stephen Fine
Sandy Goldie
Michael Insua
Clary Román

VIOLONCELLO
Will Teegarden, Principal
Alexandra Noe, Assistant Principal
Christina Chen
Elise Jiménez
Alana Klonoski
Virginia Lane
Collin Richards
Audra Thielen

BASS
Sarah Klein, Principal
Andrew Vadyak, Assistant Principal
Daniel Clayton
Breannen Shim
Kenneth Staton

FLUTE
Jennifer Thompson, Principal
Katelyn Goode

OBOE
Daniel McTiernan, Principal
James Nguyen
Clarie Santiago

CLARINET
Hannah Austin, Principal
Max Pegues

BASS TROMBONE
Zachary Sullivan

TUBA
Calvin Bond

TIMPANI
Caitlin Jones, Principal

PERCUSSION
David McDermott, Principal
Matthew Espinosa
Andrew Mankin
Brandon McKinley
Jessica Williams

HARP
Dolly Roberts

PERSONNEL MANAGER
Alexander Noe

STAGE MANAGER
Al Zhang

EQUIPMENT MANAGER
Jessica Williams

LIBRARIAN
Alexander Noe

BASSON
Daniel Sepulveda, Principal
Ethan Miller

CONTRABASSON
Phoebe Stewart

HORN
Molly Zebell, Principal
Camilo Leal, Assistant Principal
Clemente Cuevas
Laura Hagerty

TRUMPET
Cara McDermott, Principal
Lucas Owen
Kristopher Hartman

TROMBONE
Brendan Dufresne, Principal
Kevin Anderton

For more information about the UF Symphony Orchestra, please visit our website at www.arts.ufl.edu/orchestra.
Biographies

STELLA SUNG (Composer) As a national and international award-winning composer for concert, stage, and film, Stella Sung’s compositions are performed throughout the United States and abroad. Sung was the first Composer-in-Residence for the Orlando (Fla.) Philharmonic Orchestra, (2008-2011), and continues to serve as Composer-in-Residence for Dance Alive National Ballet (Gainesville, Fla.). She is currently Composer-in-Residence for the Dayton (Ohio) Performing Arts Alliance, and is a recipient of the prestigious “Music Alive” grant award (League of American Orchestras, New Music USA, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, ASCAP, and the Aaron Copland Music Fund).

Commissions have included works for world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma, the German Ministry of Culture (Rhineland-Pfalz), the Dayton Symphony Orchestra (Dayton, Ohio), the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra (Jacksonville, Fla.), the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra (Orlando, Fla.), the Akron Symphony Orchestra (Akron, Ohio), the Gainesville Chamber Orchestra (Gainesville, Fla.), the Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra (Orlando, Fla.), the Florida Young Artists Orchestra (Orlando, Fla.), the Etowah Youth Orchestra (Gadsden, Ala.), the Azure Ensemble (N.Y.), Dance Alive National Ballet (State touring ballet company of Florida), the Lyric Arts Trio (Kansas City, Kan.), saxophonist Claude Delangle (Conservatoire de Paris), guitarist Andrea Vettoretti (Rome, Italy), guitarist Eladio Scharrón (Orlando, Fla.), flautist Donna Wissinger (Fla.), the PRISM Saxophone Quartet (New York, N.Y.), the Rollins College (Winter Park, Fla.), the 2000 Alabama All-State Festival Orchestra (Tuscaloosa, Ala.), and from the Buffet Crampon Clarinet company (Jacksonville, Fla.).

The music of Stella Sung is published by the Southern Music Company/Hal Leonard, Theodore Presser Music Publishers (United States), Editions Henry Lemoine (France), and Sonic Star Music Productions, and is currently available on Koch, Naxos, Cambria, Sinfonica (Italy), MSR, and Albany recordings.

Sung holds a Bachelor of Music degree (piano performance) from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), a Master of Fine Arts degree (Composition) from the University of Florida, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree (piano performance) from the University of Texas at Austin. She is a “Distinguished Alumna” of the University of Florida, and is director of the Center for Research and Education in Arts, Technology, and Entertainment (CREATE) at the University of Central Florida. Dr. Sung is a “Pegasus” Professor, the highest honor awarded to distinguished faculty at the University of Central Florida.

ERNEST HILBERT (Librettist) Ernest Hilbert’s debut poetry collection Sixty Sonnets (2009) was described by X.J. Kennedy as “maybe the most arresting sequence we have had since John Berryman checked out of America.” His second collection, All of You on the Good Earth (2013), has been hailed as a “wonder of a book,” “original and essential,” an example of “sheer mastery of poetic form,” containing “some of the most elegant poems in American literature since the loss of Anthony Hecht.” He supplies libretti and song texts for contemporary composers Stella Sung, Daniel Felsenfeld, and Christopher LaRosa, as well as scripts for the post-punk conceptual band Mercury Radio Theater. His poems have appeared in several anthologies, including the Swallow Anthology of New American Poets (2009), Two Weeks: A Digital Anthology of Contemporary Poetry (2011), The Incredible Sestina Anthology (2013), and two Penguin anthologies, Poetry: A Pocket Anthology and Literature: A Pocket Anthology (2011). He graduated from Oxford University, where he edited the Oxford Quarterly. He later served as poetry editor of Random House’s magazine Bold Type and editor of Contemporary Poetry Review. He hosts the popular blog www.everseradio.com and the biannual E-Verse Equinox Reading Series at Fergie’s Pub in Philadelphia. He works as an antiquarian book dealer in Philadelphia, where he lives with his wife, an archaeologist.

BETH GREENBERG (Stage Director) With a curious imagination about new possibilities for 21st-century opera and its productions, stage director Beth Greenberg focuses on new American work and the challenges of redefining where and how opera can be performed.
Greenberg has earned a solid reputation for her collaborations with living American opera composers. She’s been involved in all phases of new work, from libretto development and workshop readings to fully-staged premieres. Adding to her list of new American opera productions will be the professional World Premiere of Lori Laitman’s *The Scarlet Letter* for Opera Colorado. She recently directed the West coast premiere of Rorem’s *Our Town* which was praised as “a splendid production” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She also staged early workshops of Before Night Falls by Jorge Martin and directed the premiere of excerpts from Gordon Beeberman’s *The Rat Land*, a twice-featured work on City Opera’s VOX series. *Pumped Fiction*, the comic opera by MacArthur genius John Eaton, also saw its world premiere in New York in a staging by Greenberg.

Along with her dedication to the creation and performance of new work, Beth Greenberg explores and tests the conventions of how and where opera can be performed. She directed the site-specific *Il Tabarro* aboard a retired oil tanker moored in Red Hook, Brooklyn. The production received international attention. A return to this waterfront space and the tanker Mary A. Whalen is being planned for the New York premiere of Daniel Catan’s *Florencia en el Amazonas*.

Beth Greenberg is a veteran director of classic opera and was on the New York City Opera directing staff for 23 years. For City Opera at Lincoln Center, she directed original mainstage productions of *Les Contes d’Hoffmann* and *Turandot*. Her production of *Hoffmann* was singled out by critic Terry Teachout as one “directed with spectacular flair.” She also helmed many City Opera revivals including *Der Rosenkavalier*, *La Traviata*, *Intermezzo*, *La Boheme*, and *Tosca*. Her original productions have been seen worldwide, with *Carmen* in Toyko and *Tosca* in Lima, Peru. In America she has staged *Aida* for the Utah Festival Opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Don Pasquale* for the Pittsburgh Opera Center, and *Eugene Onegin* for Opera Delaware.

Reaching out to young people about opera is also important to Greenberg. For City Opera Education she has staged *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, and *The Magic Flute*. She has taught master classes at SongFest in Malibu, the Mannes College of Music, and at the Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory.

Beth Greenberg was awarded a Fulbright to Berlin where she trained with Gotz Friedrich at the Deutsche Oper. She has been a Mentor Director for the SDC Foundation, and is currently Resident Stage Director for Opera Noire of New York and Opera for Humanity. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance (M.M. in Music Theory), and Brooklyn College (B.A. in Music).

Future directing projects include *Rigoletto* for the Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice (featuring Barry Banks, Nancy Allen Lundy, Louis Otey with Steven White conducting); and, the World Premiere of Lori Laitman’s *The Three Feathers*, adapted from the Grimm tale by librettist Dana Gioia, former NEA Chair.

**DR. ANTHONY OFFERLE** (Artistic Director) is an Associate Professor of Voice and Director of Opera at the University of Florida College of Fine Arts – School of Music. *The Red Silk Thread* marks his 21st major collaborative production with the talented students and faculty at UF. Previous musical stage works include *Die Zauberflöte*, *Tosca*, *West Side Story*, *La Traviata*, *Susannah*, *The Mikado*, *Hello Dolly* and *Anything Goes*. He has studied with such renowned teachers as Italo Tajo and Andrew B. White at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and Mollie Rich at the Stetson University School of Music. Dr. Offerle earned a Doctor of Arts degree in vocal performance and opera stage directing from the University of Northern Colorado, a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Converse College and a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Stetson University. He is the artistic director of the award-winning Operafestival di Roma summer program in Italy, which celebrated its 18th season in 2012. Dr. Offerle is the Florida district governor for the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), and a member for The American Guild of Music Artists (AGMA), Opera America, The National Opera Association, Delta Omicron, and the Music Educators National Conference (MENC).

**DR. RAYMOND CHOBAZ** (Conductor) has been music director and conductor of the University of Florida Symphony Orchestra since 1982 and the Gainesville Symphony Orchestra
from 1983 to 2001. As an International Rotary Scholar at the University of Utah he received both a Master of Music degree in orchestral conducting under Joseph Rosenstock and a Ph.D. in music composition and electronic music under Vladimir Ussachevsky. Further studies allowed him to work with Herbert Blomstedt in San Francisco, Kyrill Kondrashin in Amsterdam, Raphael Kubelik in Lucerne, Erich Leinsdorf in New York City, Witold Rowicki in Vienna, and Georg Tintner in Prague. He received additional training in contemporary music interpretation from Pierre Boulez in Paris.

Dr. Chobaz is the recipient of many federal grants, scholarships, awards and first prizes in major national and international competitions in both composition and conducting. As top winner of the International Conductors Competition in the Czech Republic he was appointed conductor-in-residence of the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic and invited to conduct all major symphony orchestras in the Czech Republic.

At the University of Florida, his personal engagement initiated numerous ballet and opera productions; television and radio broadcasts; children's and pops concerts; multimedia collaborations, interdisciplinary events with painters, poets and writers; and group efforts with dance and ethnic ensembles. Besides a full schedule as director of the University of Florida Symphony Orchestra, guest conductor, president of the Max Kaempf Institute, and chairman of the Tilly Keiser Arts Foundation in Switzerland, he is also closely associated with Robert Redford's Sundance Institute and Preserve in Sundance, Utah. In 2012, Dr. Chobaz was honored with a Lifetime Achievement and Distinguished Alumnus Award by the University of Utah. The performance of Stella Sung's world premiere of *The Red Silk Thread* constitutes the 900th musical work that Dr. Chobaz has introduced and performed here in Gainesville over the past 32 seasons.

**DR. WILL KESLING** (Chorus Master, Director of Choirs) has conducted hundreds of choral ensembles and some 40 professional symphony orchestras throughout the world. His talents for weaving together text and music, chorus and orchestra have garnered him international respect. A *Washington Post* concert review sums his abilities in two words: “clear professionalism.” A *New York Daily News* reviewer calls “Will Kesling’s conducting truly inspired and impeccably paced.” Dr. Kesling has conducted a number of engagements in Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as in major concert halls internationally. He served as the Associate Conductor of the Manhattan Philharmonic Orchestra, New York City, as the Principal Guest Conductor of the St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, Russia, and was the Music Director and Conductor of the Mountain West Symphony Orchestra, Utah for 18 years.

Dr. Kesling is the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Florida. Over the past 25 years, his choirs have received international attention and have made multiple appearances at both national and divisional conventions for the American Choral Directors Association. In March 2002, his Utah State University Chamber Choir appeared before the combined Western and Northwestern Division Convention of the College Band Directors Association. That same month, the Utah State University Combined Choirs were featured in the opening ceremonies of the Paralympics on NBC.

On September 11, 2004, Maestro Kesling made his debut with the National Philharmonic in Constitution Hall, Washington, D.C., premiering the new Revolutionary War oratorio, *A Prelude to Glory*. In June 2005 in Prague, Dr. Kesling conducted the Czech National Orchestra Choir Respighi’s *Pines of Rome* and *Carmina Burana*, joined by the Prague Chamber Choir.

In recognition of these achievements Dr. Kesling was awarded The Congressional Order of Merit by the Congress of the United States of America in September 2003 and the Ronald Reagan Gold Medal in November 2004. In March 2006, Professor Kesling was awarded the Congressional Medal of Distinction for his contributions to the cultural life of the citizenry.

**RIC ROSE** (Dance Fight Choreographer) is an Associate Professor of Dance within the School of Theatre and Dance. His primary teaching focus is ballet and jazz, having taught within the UF curriculum all levels of modern, ballet, and jazz as well as theatre dance styles, dance improvisation, fundamentals of dance, dance history, graduate movement for actors, dance
composition, and pilates. He has directed the summer dance intensive on numerous occasions and is a member of the Graduate Faculty. Since 1990, he has twice been awarded both the Teacher of the Year (College of Fine Arts) at UF and the TIP University Award for excellence in teaching. He has also been recognized with a departmental Faculty of the Year and a university Superior Accomplishment Award. His artistic and creative vita includes abundant national and international performance and choreographic credits in dance, theatre, and musical theatre. He has also choreographed for numerous cabarets, pageants, body builders and singing ensembles. Artistic collaborations at UF include a project with colleagues in music and electrical engineering aimed toward developing an alternative MIDI controller for dance.

Rose is also an independent choreographer and performer. He has produced several solo concerts and has frequented as guest artist and instructor throughout Florida and the east coast. He has served as adjudicator for both ACDF and ACTF events and is an Emcee favorite for the 4-H Congress in Florida. Rose has been a principal dancer with Dance Alive National Ballet, Gainesville’s professional dance company, since 1984 and has written scripts for several of the company’s original ballets. He performed for a year at Bally’s Park Place Casino and Hotel as a singer and dancer in Outrageous, Bold and Beautiful. He also did specialty choreography in the movie Doc Hollywood, where he appeared as a squash. He is a frequent choreographer and Actor’s Equity performer at the Hippodrome State Theatre, which produced his original work The Canta Danca Dancer a play about dance for young audiences, which toured throughout the Florida school system in their “Building Audiences of Tomorrow” program.

He received his M.F.A. in Dance from Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut and his B.A. in Speech and Theatre Education from Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio.

JUDY SKINNER (Choreographer) began her studies in Gainesville, Fla. After receiving her B.A. and M.Ed. from the University of Florida, she continued her studies in New York. Skinner received her first Individual Fellowship in Choreography from the State of Florida in 1987, her second in 1994, her third in 1999 and her most recent in 2010. She was awarded an Artist Enhancement Grant by the State of Florida in 2006. Skinner served as Executive Director for Dance Alive National Ballet for 18 years and as Resident Choreographer since 1979. She has been responsible for developing all arts education programming since 1976; writing curriculum guides for Robin Hood, Lady Bug: Action Hero!, and Nutcracker as well as a generic guide suitable for middle and high school students. Skinner has created more than 40 ballets for Dance Alive National Ballet including Incertezza, Waiting, Who Is Silent, Couples, Mobiles, Variations, Rhapsody In Blue, Facets and sections of Soar and Zoom.

Skinner served on the State Dance Panel in 1985 and 1986, the Artist in Education Panel in 1991, the Cultural Support Panel in 2002, and the Professional Committee for ACE (Arts for a Complete Education). Skinner has been awarded the “Nancy Smith Award” by the Florida Dance Association for “Outstanding Contribution To The Art of Dance in Florida,” “Lifetime Achievement in Arts” award by the City of Gainesville, and “Women Who Make A Difference“ award by the Girl Scouts of America.

Skinner is co-owner of Pofahl Studios, Official School of Dance Alive National Ballet.

The Original Ninjaneers Biographies

JOE ROSA (Director) Joe Rosa was born a Navy brat in the mid ’70s on the island Oahu in the Hawaiian Islands. His love for film and animation came from his late grandfather who started teaching him how to draw Disney characters as a child. His first experience with a computer was on the old TRS-80 (better known as the TRASH-80). He knew that computers were going to be a permanent fixture in his future but didn’t realize how until the movie TRON hit the theaters in 1982. He was captivated by it and the amazing CGI work for the time, but it wasn’t until years later that he realized how groundbreaking TRON really was in incorporating computer generated imagery, thus ushering in a new era with computer animation. In his middle teens, he tried getting his hands on any CG program he could such as Bryce 3D, Poser, Lightwave, 3D Studio Max (now Autodesk owned), and MAYA. Since those early days and the seed that had been
planted in his head by pure chance, he has completed college with a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Language, specializing in animation, from the University of Central Florida in Orlando. He’s a firm believer that if you don’t love your job then you’re not loving life. He loves what he’s doing and can’t wait to get on to the next project.

HEATHER KNOTT (Artistic Director) Born in Orlando, Fla., Heather Knott’s career in the industry, though in its infancy, has already taken the road less traveled. From her early training in traditional drawing and sculpting throughout her childhood, to four years within the Theatre Magnet Program at Dr. Phillips High School, a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Florida State University, and a Bachelors of Art in Visual Language, specializing in character animation, from the University of Central Florida, her education alone has already built an eclectic foundation in the visual arts. Through these varied experiences, she brings a unique perspective to the animation industry and extensive experience with adapting to unfamiliar territory.

CHRIS BROWN (Technical Director) Chris Brown’s entrance into 3D work began, as many have, with video games. He developed a great love for cinematic driven games, and since he had nothing else he really wanted to do with his life he looked into it. At age 15 he started mowing lawns and cleaning offices for spare cash and bought a student copy of Lightwave 7.5. As he would figure out some small piece of the puzzle he would find 20 more, and the thrill of that victory would keep him pushing through. Within a year it became both wonderfully and terribly apparent to him that he would simply never be able to figure out everything about this field, that the problems would continue to present themselves, and worse still, that he was hopelessly addicted. While attending the University of Central Florida he began trying his hand at the more specialized areas of rigging and technical effects, and found that out of every aspect of the trade he’d sampled these more than any other held an overflowing font of problems. From the first time some poor animator came to him with the now well-worn tune of “the character is broke,” or a director simply said “just make this work” he’s had no end of interesting little disasters to remedy, and solutions to joyfully devise.

Cast Biographies

RACHEL BEAL, mezzo-soprano (Yanira) is finishing her third year of undergraduate studies at the University of Florida. She is seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree in combination with an outside field. In the Fall of 2013 she made her debut with the UF Opera program preforming the role of La zelatrice in the production of Suor Angelica. Beal is currently studying under the direction of Dr. Elizabeth Graham.

DALE HOUSTON BRUMFIELD, bass (Caspar/Khan cover) is originally from Salem, Mass. and began studying music in 2005 at Southwest Mississippi Community College. After acquiring an Associate of Arts degree, he went on to receive a Bachelor of Music in Performance from William Carey University under the instruction of Connie Roberts. This is Brumfield’s eleventh major musical production preceded most recently by The Impresario (Bluff), Savitri (Death), Die Zauberflöte (Sarastro), The Little Prince (King), La Bohème (Colline), and Gianni Schicchi (Schicchi). Besides opera and musical theatre, Brumfield has participated in instrumental ensembles where he performed on steel drums, handbells, trumpet, French horn, marimba and piano. Mr. Brumfield has attended several state and regional vocal competitions, and placed first in his most recent attendance of NATS. Dale has recently earned his Master’s in Music from the University of Florida and plans to further his studies in music.

ERICK CROW, tenor (Prince Ghazan/Marco Polo understudy) Born in Tulsa, Okla., Erick Crow has lived in Coral Springs, Florida for the past 15 years. Hailed for being an interdisciplinary performer, Crow’s credits include performances with The Hilton Head Choral Society, Helena Choral Festival in Montana, The Jacksonville Symphony, Nova Southeastern Orchestra, and the Cherokee Historical Association in North Carolina. He has performed many leading roles both in musical theatre and opera. Some of his titles include Monsier Vogelsang in Der Schauspieldirektor, Marco in The Gondoliers, Major Ridge in Unto These Hills, Laurie in Little Women, Ferrando in Così fan tutte, and Freddie in Chess. Crow received his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Music Theatre
from Jacksonville University in 2012. He is currently pursuing his Masters of Music: Voice Performance degree at the University of Florida. He is a member of The Suzuki Association of America and Pi Kappa Lambda Honor Collegiate Music Society. Crow is a student of Dr. Tony Offerle at the University of Florida.

CAROLINE FJELDHEIM (Cocachin understudy) is finishing her fourth year studying vocal performance with Dr. Elizabeth Graham at the University of Florida. This is her fourth production with UF’s Opera Workshop. She previously performed in productions of Die Fledermaus (ensemble, 2012), Dido and Aeneas (the Spirit, 2013), and Suor Angelica (Suor Osmina, 2013).

ALEXANDRA FLINN-VIVAS, mezzo-soprano (Saran) is a first-year master of music student at the University of Florida studying vocal performance with Dr. Elizabeth Graham. She received a dual bachelor’s degree in vocal performance and public communication in 2006 from American University, in Washington, D.C. While residing in Washington, D.C., Flinn-Vivas taught music to kindergarten through eighth grade in 2007. She then worked at a nonprofit while continuing her vocal studies privately. She has participated in the Crittenden Opera workshops and performed scenes from Le nozze di Figaro, Lakmé, Idomeneo, Rosenkavalier, Così fan tutte, and Orfeo. She has performed in recitals in Washington, D.C. As a Nicaraguan-American, she has performed in solo engagements with the national theatre of Nicaragua, known as Teatro Nacional Rubén Dario. During her first semester at the University of Florida, she performed the role of the Principessa in Suor Angelica and is now debuting the role of Saran.

URTNASAN GANTULGA (Court Musician) is a member of the Mongolian morin khuur (Horse-head fiddle) ensemble. He has played the morin khuur since 1995 and travels around the world playing and demonstrating this unique Mongolian folk instrument. He now lives in Seattle and teaches others how to play the morin khuur.

JONATHAN GRAVELY, baritone (Captain Ganbattar) is a third-year bachelor of music student at the University of Florida studying vocal performance. He received his associate’s degree from Santa Fe College in 2011 where he was on full-performance scholarship. A native of Gainesville, Gravely performed as a featured soloist with many area churches and sang the baritone solos in Handel’s Messiah. Last semester he performed as Rodolfo for UF’s An Evening with Puccini in a scene from La Bohème. Additionally, he played the role of the Unnamed Bass in UF’s production of Too Many Sopranos.

HANNAH HOUGH, soprano (Empress Nambui) In 2012, Hough received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Fla. She is currently pursuing a Master of Music degree in performance from the University of Florida under the study of Dr. Elizabeth Graham. The year 2013 was one of transition, gradually making the switch from mezzo to soprano. Beginning the year as Suzuki in Madama Butterfly, (Venice Performing Arts Series), the Cousin in Madama Butterfly, (Imperial Symphony Orchestra) and ending with the title role in Suor Angelica (The University of Florida Opera Theater) made for a successful year indeed. Meanwhile, she continues to sing around central and north Florida in performances of Handel’s Messiah with the Bach Festival of Central Florida and as the soprano soloist in Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana with the Ocala Symphony Orchestra this past February. Upcoming engagements include the title in Gustav Holst’s Savitri with the Central Florida Music Consortium, and the opportunity to perform once again with the Ocala Symphony Orchestra as the soprano soloist in Handel’s Messiah in December.

HEIN JUNG, soprano (Princess Cocachin) Acclaimed as being of “superior vocal value” by The Boston Globe, Soprano Hein Jung has won numerous competitions including the Metropolitan Opera National Council Wisconsin District, Metropolitan Opera National Council Minnesota Regional, Schubert Competition, Bel Canto Competition, and the Irma Cooper Opera Columbus International Competition.

Active in both operatic and concert stages, Jung has performed in Korea; Spain; the United States with the Madison Opera, Milwaukee Symphony, Kenosha-Racine Symphony, San Francisco Opera Orchestra, Tampa Oratorio Singers, Bel Canto Chorus; Recital Series in Sejong.
Art Hall (Korea); and the Artist Series of Sarasota. She has also been featured in internationally renowned festivals and concerts in Tanglewood, San Francisco Merola program, concert with Mark Morris Dance Group, Ned Rorem Tribute Concert, and a Cabaret Recital by Dawn Upshaw. Her opera credits mark leading roles such as Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflote*, Queen Juana in the world premiere of *Rage d’amour* commissioned by Tanglewood, Lucia in *Rape of Lucretia*, Romilda in *Serse*, Fiordiligi in *Cosi fan tutte*, Blanche in *Dialogue of Carmelites*, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, which earned her rave reviews from *The Boston Globe*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Classical Voice* and *The Capital Times*.

Jung has been featured as a soprano soloist in major oratorio works such as Mozart’s *C Minor Mass*, Poulenc’s *Gloria*, Haydn’s *Lord Nelson Mass* and Handel’s *Messiah*. She also enjoys performing new music. Recently, renowned new music composer Zack Browning dedicated *Song Arirang* to Jung, which was performed in the New Music Festival at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. This piece was requested to be performed in the Encore Recital Series at the Palladium Theater in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Upcoming engagements include performances as Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* for the St. Petersburg Opera.

MATT MORGAN, tenor (Marco Polo) Having the distinction of making debuts at three of the four theaters at New York’s Lincoln Center, Matt Morgan has established himself as a tenor to watch. His New York debut came as Don Gomez in Weber’s *Die drei Pintos* with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra. The very same season, his New York City Opera debut occurred in the world premiere of Charles Wuorinen’s *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. Following these successes, Morgan debuted with the National Chorale at Avery Fisher Hall as the tenor soloist in Handel’s *Messiah*.

In the 2012-2013 season Morgan returned to Jacksonville Symphony as Rodrigo in *Otello*, joined Amarillo Opera for the title role in *Candide*, and appeared with the Boise Philharmonic Orchestra for *Messiah*. Upcoming engagements include a return to the Dayton Philharmonic for their Season Opening Spectacular, and a return to Jacksonville Symphony as Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. The 2011-2012 season brought Handel’s *Messiah* with both the Dayton Philharmonic and Jacksonville Symphony, Almaviva in Connecticut Opera Theater’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and concert appearances with the New Jersey Symphony and at Avery Fisher Hall in New York City. The 2009-2010 season saw Morgan’s debut in the title role of *Faust* with Opera Idaho, Hamlet in *Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* with AOP and the Mark Morris Dance Company, and a return to New York City Opera as Tapioca in *L’etoile*. He was recently seen as Ruggero in *La rondine* with the Opera Company of Middlebury after previously appearing with the company as Nadir. Additional recent engagements include Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance* with Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, and Nanki-Poo in *The Mikado* with Syracuse Opera. He also created the role of Pan in the world premiere and recording of *The Judgment of Minds* with the American Opera Projects. An appearance with the Opera Theater of Connecticut as Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* concludes his season. In previous seasons, he debuted at Opera Colorado as Ferrando in *Cosi fan tutte*, Greenwich Music Festival as Der Soldat in Viktor Ullmann’s *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, and Sacramento Opera as Frederick in *The Pirates of Penzance*. After successes as Laurie in *Little Women*, he returned to Dayton Opera as Camille in *The Merry Widow*.

He performed at New York City Opera for three consecutive seasons to great audience and critical acclaim in a variety of repertoire ranging from Rameau’s *Platee* to works of the 20th century. Most recently, Morgan appeared in their new production of *The Pirates of Penzance* where he was an “endearing and loveable” Frederick “with the right hero looks and a wonderful tenor voice.” Among his many appearances at Lincoln Center his other New York successes include his portrayal of Britten’s anti-hero in Gotham Chamber Opera’s wildly successful production of *Albert Herring*.

Outside of New York City, Morgan has appeared with Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Colorado, Fort Worth Opera, Portland Opera, New Orleans Opera, Dayton Opera, Toledo Opera, and many others in a variety of repertoire. His performances have included Nemorino in *L’elisir d’amore,*
Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Ramiro in *La cenerentola*, Romeo in *Roméo et Juliette*, as well as many works of modern opera and musical theater. A much sought after interpreter of this repertoire, he has most recently starred at New York City Opera as Frederick in their new production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, after previously taking part in their premieres of *The Mines of Sulphur*, and *The Little Prince*. He also appeared recently with Fort Worth Opera as Curly opposite Anthony Dean Griffey in *Of Mice and Men* and as Tony in *West Side Story* with New Orleans Opera.

His busy concert schedule has taken him to sing with some of the country’s leading symphony orchestras and concert organizations including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the American Symphony Orchestra, the National Chorale, and the Bard Music Festival in a variety of repertoire ranging from the works of Handel to music of the 20th century. Morgan tours North America regularly, most recently playing to crowds of tens of thousands at the two largest Italian festivals in North America (Milwaukee Festa Italiana and the Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival). As a recording artist his DVDs and CD’s are distributed internationally and are carried by every online music service and music seller worldwide. Morgan is an alumnus of the Pittsburgh Opera Center, National Opera Company, and Louisiana State University.

**ANTHONY OFFERLE**, bass-baritone (Uncle Maffeo) A native of Miami, Florida, Anthony Offerle’s credits include performances with the OperaEstate in Rome, Cincinnati Opera, International Chamber Orchestra, Dayton Opera, Wyoming Opera, Charleston Symphony, Savannah Symphony, Evansville Philharmonic, and the Piccolo Spoleto Festival. He has sung more than 30 leading roles including title roles in *Don Giovanni* and *Don Pasquale*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Bartolo in both *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Le nozze di Figaro*. Equally at home with musical theater repertoire, he has performed the Major General in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Sir Despard Murgatroyd in *Ruddigore*, Riff in *West Side Story*, and Curly in *Oklahoma*.

An active concert performer, he served as guest soloist in London’s Westminster Abbey and St. Paul’s Cathedral as well as St. Giles Cathedral in Scotland. *The Charleston Post and Courier* said of his *Messiah*, “Mr. Offerle sang with a rich warm tone and an exciting top.” *The New York Amsterdam News* said of his 2005 recital debut in *Manhattan*, “Offerle brought to his selections an exceptionally beautiful baritone, fine technical command and considerable interpretive skill. He proved to be a compelling singing-actor.”

Dr. Offerle is an Associate Professor at the University of Florida School of Music where he teaches studio voice, directs the opera program, and is the musical director for the fall musical theatre productions.

**THOMAS POTTER**, baritone (Kublai Kahn) A winner of the Luciano Pavarotti International Vocal Competition, baritone Thomas Potter teaches undergraduate and graduate level voice and is the Opera Director at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. He also maintains a rather busy performance career with performances of Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*, Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Puccini’s *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Gianni Schicchi*, Barber’s *Vanessa*, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Mozart’s Requiem, and Duruflé’s Requiem all within the last two years. Potter also occasionally spends part of his summer teaching voice and staging opera scenes at Music Theater Bavaria in Oberaudorf, Germany.

Professor Potter made his professional opera debut in 1986 singing Giorgio Germont in matinee performances of *La Traviata* for the San Francisco Opera Center. He also maintains a rather busy performance career with performances of Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*, Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Puccini’s *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, and Gianni Schicchi*, Barber’s *Vanessa*, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Mozart’s Requiem, and Duruflé’s Requiem all within the last two years. Potter also occasionally spends part of his summer teaching voice and staging opera scenes at Music Theater Bavaria in Oberaudorf, Germany.

Professor Potter made his professional opera debut in 1986 singing Giorgio Germont in matinee performances of *La Traviata* for the San Francisco Opera Center. Most of his operatic career has centered around the great Verdi baritone roles such as Renato in *Un ballo in maschera*, il Conte di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, and the title roles of *Macbeth* and *Rigoletto*. He has also had a great deal of success as “Baron Scarpia” in *Tosca*. For a complete list of repertoire, to read reviews, view production photos, and hear audio excerpts of his singing, please visit his website of www.ThomasPotterOnline.com.

A few of the opera companies with which Potter has performed include the Teatro Comunale Giuseppe Verdi in Trieste *Don Carlo*, the Stadttheater St. Gallen in Switzerland (*Tosca*, *La Traviata*,...
Attila, Fidelio, Carmen, Salome, Aida, Cavalleria Rusticana, Palm Beach Opera (Salome, Rigoletto, Cavalleria Rusticana / I Pagliacci), Sarasota Opera (Vanessa), Nashville Opera (Turandot), Ópera Cordoba in Spain (Tosca), Opera São Paulo in Brazil (Carmen and Nabucco), Ópera du Rhin in Strasbourg (Don Carlo), the Bregenzer Festspiele in Austria (Nabucco), Badisches Staatstheater in Karlsruhe (Attila), Atlanta Opera (Rigoletto and Un ballo in maschera), Orlando Opera (Il Trovatore and Madama Butterfly), Utah Opera (Samson et Dalila), and Indianapolis Opera (Lucia di Lammermoor, Hänsel und Gretel, Macbeth, Il Trovatore, Samson et Dalila, Turandot, La Bohème, The Crucible, and Falstaff).

CLARY A. ROMÁN, contralto (Empress Tegulen) Clary A. Román began her musical education as a violinist at the age of eight. She was introduced to the world of singing a year later when she was urged by her viola instructor to audition for the choir. This was the beginning of an ever-growing passion for music, which led her to pursue music at the college level. Román auditioned and was accepted as a violinist at the University of Florida, yet halfway through her freshman year she was advised to audition for the voice studio. Once accepted, her vocal career began at the age of 17 and a new passion for classical vocal music sprouted. This new love for vocal music opened doors into the operatic world. Román then began to explore the opera world while sitting in the orchestra pit at the University of Florida. She participated in the orchestra for The Mikado, Susannah, and Tosca. In 2011, she was presented with the opportunity to learn costuming and staging at a UF production of The Magic Flute, which further fueled her love for opera. Finally, in July 2012, her opportunity to be onstage came when Román performed the role of Third Spirit in Operafestival di Roma’s production of The Magic Flute. In Spring 2013, Román found herself once again on stage, yet this time portraying the Sorceress in UF’s production of Dido and Aeneas. Román received a bachelor’s degree in music education from the University of Florida and is currently pursuing a master’s degree in vocal performance, at the same institution.

MATTHEW RUFF, baritone (Genoese Prison Guard) Matthew Ruff is a junior in the B.F.A. musical theatre program at the University of Florida. He has performed the parts of Harry the Horse (Guys and Dolls), Officer Barrel (Urinetown), Martin Harrison (Chicago), Huck Finn (Big River), Kenickie (Grease), and various other roles. He thanks God, his instructors, family and awesome friend for all they do. Peace and love.

STEPHEN SAXON, baritone (Rustichello) Stephen Saxon has soloed on four continents; in national telecasts; for heads of state; under the batons of maestri such as Roberto Abbado, Wolfgang Sawallisch and Leonard Slatkin; with the symphonies/orchestras of St. Louis, Minnesota, Santiago (Chile, Teatro Municipal), Washington, D.C. (National), Dallas, Phoenix, San Francisco, Long Beach and many others; and with the New York City, Washington, and Orlando Opera companies, among others. Dozens of Kennedy Center performances have consisted principally of the well-known passions, oratorios, requiems and masses by Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and Verdi. He soloed in the premiere of Jacob Druckman’s oratorio, Vox Humana, commissioned by the National Symphony. He has sung Mahler’s Eighth four times, from Kalamazoo to Caracas, and Beethoven’s Ninth 36 times, from Tokyo to Santiago. A violinist twice chosen Outstanding Music Major at USM, Saxon has local credits as a strolling violinist/guitarist/singer and as a founding board member of and frequent soloist with the Gainesville Civic Chorus. In 2004, after 35 years of service, he retired from UF, and is now Professor Emeritus, Department of Mathematics, University of Florida. He continues to publish and address international conferences in his research area. In 2003 he was elected Academico Correspondiente by La Real Academia de Ciencias Exactas, Fisicas y Naturales, the Spanish equivalent of our National Academy of Science.

JAMEY WRIGHT, soprano (Empress Chabi) Jamey Wright is a sophomore in the vocal performance program at the University of Florida. Wright is a member of the University Concert Choir and UF Opera Theatre. With the Concert Choir, she has performed in several chamber ensembles and was featured as a soloist in the Gospel Mass by Dr. Robert Ray. Past roles with the Opera Theatre include La Sorella Infermiera in Puccini’s Suor Angelica (Fall 2013), Anna in a scene
from Puccini’s *Le Villi* as part of the opera scenes workshop concert (Fall 2013), and the Second Witch in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* (Spring 2013).

**WEIJIA (GINA) YANG** (Solo Dancer) Yang Weijia is a visiting scholar (2013-2014) at the University of Florida. Yang, who prefers to be called “Gina,” is on scholarship from the China Scholarship Council, a nonprofit institution that provides opportunities to Chinese citizens to study abroad in order to develop educational, scientific, and cultural exchanges. During her one-year stay, Yang will collaborate with Dr. Joan Frosch to teach and conduct research on U.S-based approaches on higher education. As part of her research, Yang has been engaging in modern dance technique classes, viewing rehearsals, and creating choreographic work. Next semester, Yang will also lead world dance and intercultural performance teaching Chinese national and folk dance, as well as master classes in Chinese modern dance.

Yang is a choreographer and lecturer in the Department of Music and Dance from Honghe University, Yunnan Province, China. At the age of seven, Yang initiated her lifelong study of Chinese historic national and intricate folk dances representing more than a dozen ethnicities across China. From 2002 to 2006, Yang began her professional modern dance study as a dance major at the Art Academy of Yunnan University and went on to study modern dance choreography at Beijing Dance Academy from 2006 to 2007. Yang’s choreography is rooted in the integration of Chinese national folk dance and contemporary dance. Yang hopes this international arts exchange won’t stop after her one-year stay. She is interested in collaborating with the UF Center for World Arts to identify future opportunities for art exchanges between China and the United States.