

2021–2022 | 122nd Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Friday, March 18, at 8:00

Sunday, March 20, at 2:00

The Hours

An Opera in Two Acts

Based on the book by Michael Cunningham and the Paramount Pictures film

Music by Kevin Puts

Libretto by Greg Pierce

Conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Renée Fleming Soprano (Clarissa Vaughan)

Jennifer Johnson Cano Mezzo-soprano (Virginia Woolf)

Kelli O'Hara Soprano (Laura Brown)

Brett Polegato Baritone (Richard, Clarissa's best friend)

Jamez McCorkle Tenor (Leonard, Virginia's husband)

Deborah Nansteel Mezzo-soprano (Sally, Clarissa's partner)

Brandon Cedel Bass-baritone (Dan, Laura's husband)

William Burden Tenor (Louis, Richard's ex-boyfriend)

Sylvia D'Eramo Soprano (Kitty, Laura's neighbor/Vanessa, Virginia's sister)

Raven McMillon Soprano (Barbara, a florist/Mrs. Latch, Richie's babysitter)

Richard Troxell Tenor (Walter, a novelist/Michael, a novelist)

Chuan Yuan Liu Countertenor (Man Under the Arch/Hotel Clerk)

Jonah Serotta Boy Soprano (Richie, Laura and Dan's son)

Chelsea Laggan Mezzo-soprano (Nelly, the Woolfs's cook/Heather, Sally's ex-girlfriend)

Thomas FitzGerald Boy Soprano (Julian, Vanessa's oldest child)

Elliet Brown Boy Soprano (Quentin, Vanessa's middle child) (Friday)

Devan Truax Boy Soprano (Quentin, Vanessa's middle child) (Sunday)

Sarah Shoff Soprano (Angelica, Vanessa's youngest child) (Friday)

Sydney Parson Soprano (Angelica, Vanessa's youngest child) (Sunday)

Philadelphia Symphonic Choir

Joe Miller Director

Paula Suozzi Stage Director

Luci Burdick Stage Manager

Michael Panayos Supertitles

Tony Solitro Supertitles Cue Caller

Paul Cremo Dramaturg

These are the world premiere performances of the concert version of *The Hours*, commissioned by The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera.

This program runs approximately 2 hours, 25 minutes, including intermission.

Lead support for *The Hours* was given by **Constance and Michael Cone**.

Additional support was given by **Naomi and Stephen Breman, Robert and Julie Jensen Bryan, Christos Coutifaris and Deborah Driscoll, Joyce Creamer, Linda and David Glickstein, Joseph and Bette Hirsch, and Sandy and David Marshall**.

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM, and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit www.wrti.org to listen live or for more details.

Synopsis

The Hours takes place in a single day. Clarissa is in New York City in 1999. Virginia is in Richmond, England, in 1923. Laura is in Los Angeles in 1949.

ACT I

Prologue: The chorus, representing Virginia's inner thoughts, tinkers with the opening line of the novel she's working on, *Mrs. Dalloway*.

In their West Village apartment, Clarissa and her partner, Sally, prepare for tonight's party celebrating Clarissa's best friend, Richard, a writer who is dying of AIDS. Sally doubts Richard is well enough to attend but Clarissa refuses to accept the dire state of Richard's health.

Clarissa sets out to buy flowers for the party, determined to forget her anxiety about Richard by focusing on the wonders of a spring day in Washington Square. As she listens to the otherworldly Man Under the Arch sing, she sees Walter, a writer friend, and invites him to the party.

Virginia Woolf, anxious about her new novel, watches her husband, Leonard, edit proofs and reflects on the many roles Leonard must play in her life.

At the flower shop Barbara the florist greets Clarissa with a kiss, sending Clarissa into a momentary fantasy in which Barbara is her lover. She finds the perfect flowers and heads off to check on Richard.

Virginia struggles to write, distracted by thoughts of bustling London, in contrast to staid, suburban Richmond. Virginia realizes that a character in her novel must die but she isn't sure who. Resisting the tug toward depression, she starts to write.

In her bed in Los Angeles, Laura Brown is reading the sentences from *Mrs. Dalloway* that Virginia is writing. Laura, who is pregnant, dreads facing her duties as wife and mother, since today is her husband Dan's birthday, and he and her young son, Richie, are waiting for her downstairs.

Laura enters her kitchen to find her energetic husband, Dan, and six-year-old son, Richie, who are concerned about her. She tries to hide her anxiety and Dan goes off to work, leaving her to face her young son.

On her way to Richard's, Clarissa wonders whether Sally is really the best partner for her. She stops at the corner where, years ago, she coolly ended her nascent romantic relationship with Richard. When she arrives at Richard's apartment, Clarissa finds him frail and forgetful. He tells her he can't face the party, but she insists he needs to try harder. Richard confides to her that sometimes he still imagines them as lovers.

In Laura's kitchen, her anxiety escalates as she tries to bake a birthday cake with Richie. Virginia asks her cook, Nelly, whether she believes that a young woman

could start the day joyfully and then decide to kill herself, which leads Virginia into a fantasy foreshadowing the way she'll eventually end her own life.

In Laura's kitchen, her neighbor Kitty visits and tells Laura she might have cancer. Laura escapes into a romantic fantasy about Kitty, and as she consoles Kitty, she finds herself kissing her. Virginia, too anxious to write, heads out into the world, contemplating whether she should take the train to London or end her life in the river. Clarissa has a gnawing feeling that something's wrong with Richard and heads back toward his apartment. The three women are united in their need to escape and in their terror of what they might find.

ACT II

Laura has found herself on a bed in an otherworldly hotel room, armed with a bottle of pills and *Mrs. Dalloway*. She doesn't know why she's there or what she'll do now: kill herself or read her book. She tries to piece together the last hour, remembering a surreal interaction with the Hotel Clerk.

Laura reads *Mrs. Dalloway*, conjuring up Virginia, who is seen approaching the river. Laura also contemplates suicide. Virginia is startled by Michael, a contemporary novelist who appears on the riverbank. He asks her not to kill herself, telling her that her life has meaning to him, even though they haven't met. Leonard finds Virginia and tells her he was convinced that this time he'd find her dead and he'd have to break the news to her sister, Vanessa. Virginia is moved by the depth of his concern.

Clarissa, heading back to Richard's, overhears a church choir rehearsing. Their lyrics seem written for her. Outside Richard's apartment, she finds Louis, Richard's ex-boyfriend, who is debating whether or not to visit him. He recalls the formative summer the three of them spent in Wellfleet, triggering a flashback depicting the delirious closeness Clarissa and Richard once shared, a closeness that excluded Louis.

Virginia, back in her studio, hears children's voices and wonders if she's losing her mind. She goes out to her garden to find her sister, Vanessa, and her children holding a funeral service for a dying bird. As Virginia manically makes a grave for the bird, Vanessa realizes the severity of her sister's illness. In the hotel room, Laura castigates herself for considering suicide when she has a young child and another one on the way. She is determined to stay alive and to face her motherly duties.

Clarissa enters Richard's apartment to find him standing on his window ledge. As she tries to convince him to step down, he explains that all he wanted was to write something good, something that might touch someone. He tells Clarissa he loves her and steps out the window, falling to his death on the pavement below.

As Clarissa races over to Richard's broken body, the chorus becomes her short-circuiting psyche, reassembling images and words from the day. Laura brings herself to leave the hotel and drives down the Pasadena Freeway. Virginia, at the bird grave, realizes her sanity is slipping. All three women seem to be drowning.

Laura picks up Richie at the home of the sitter, Mrs. Latch. Richie is scared that she was gone because she has something "growing inside her," which is what he heard Kitty say. At the Woolfs's dining table, Virginia thanks Leonard for the happiness he has given her. Dan comes home to his birthday celebration and expresses how happy his family has made him. Richard's friends gather at his party, now a wake. Clarissa realizes that her failure to acknowledge Richard's physical and mental state might have contributed to his death. Richard's mother, Laura, arrives at the party and tries to express regret about her failures as a mother.

As the others recede, Clarissa, Laura, and Virginia find themselves in a space that transcends time and place, where they can finally perceive each other. They are astonished that all along, as they traveled through their days feeling alone, there were others who felt the same, influencing and being influenced by each other in ways they couldn't possibly understand.



The Philadelphia Orchestra

The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the world's preeminent orchestras. It strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust educational initiatives, and an ongoing commitment to the communities that it serves, the ensemble is on a path to create an expansive future for classical music, and to further the place of the arts in an open and democratic society.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 10th season as the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, from Verizon Hall to community centers, the Mann Center to Penn's Landing, classrooms to hospitals, and over the airwaves and online.

In March 2020, in response to the cancellation of concerts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra launched the Virtual Philadelphia Orchestra, a portal hosting video and audio of performances, free, on its website and social media platforms. In September 2020 the Orchestra announced *Our World NOW*, its reimaged season of concerts filmed without audiences and presented on its Digital Stage. The Orchestra also inaugurated free offerings:

HearTOGETHER, a series on racial and social justice; educational activities; and *Our City, Your Orchestra*, small ensemble performances from locations throughout the Philadelphia region.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's award-winning educational and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, Free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program, and All City Orchestra Fellowships.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

The Orchestra also makes live recordings available on popular digital music services and as part of the Listen On Demand section of its website. Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording, with 10 celebrated releases on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Music Director

George Etheredge



Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 10th season as music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Additionally, he became the third music director of New York's Metropolitan Opera in 2018. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him "phenomenal," adding that "the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better."

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, and in 2017 he became an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world's most revered ensembles and at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon (DG) in 2018. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 10 releases on that label. His upcoming recordings will include projects with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Orchestre Métropolitain, with which he will also continue to record for ATMA Classique. Additionally, he has recorded with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records, and the London Philharmonic for the LPO label.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal's Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick's honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; *Musical America's* 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO KLASSIK's 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada's National Arts Centre Award; the Virginia Parker Prize; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, and Laval University.

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

Artists

Andrew Eccles



Soprano **Renée Fleming** (Clarissa Vaughan) is one of the most highly acclaimed singers of our time, performing on the stages of the world's greatest opera houses and concert halls. Honored with four GRAMMY awards and the National Medal of Arts, she has sung for momentous occasions from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony to the Diamond Jubilee Concert for Queen Elizabeth II. In 2014 she became the first classical artist to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the Super Bowl.

Her concert schedule this year has taken her to Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Copenhagen, New York, and Houston. During the pandemic, she performed in streamed virtual concerts for the Metropolitan Opera, the Kennedy Center, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. In 2019 she appeared opposite Ben Whishaw in Anne Carson's *Norma Jean Baker of Troy* to open the Shed in New York City. She earned a Tony Award nomination for her performance in the 2018 Broadway production of *Carousel*. Her latest album is *Voice of Nature: The Anthropocene*, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin as pianist. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1998, performing at the 141st Academy of Music Anniversary Concert with Wolfgang Sawallisch.

Grant Legan



Mezzo-soprano **Jennifer Johnson Cano** (Virginia Woolf) has garnered critical acclaim for performances of both new and standard repertoire. In 2019 she starred as Offred in Poul Ruders's *The Handmaid's Tale* at Boston Lyric Opera. With more than 100 performances on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera, her most recent roles have included Nicklausse in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffman*, Emilia in Verdi's *Otello*, Hansel in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, and

Meg Page in Verdi's *Falstaff*. Highlights this season include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Chicago and San Francisco symphonies and the New York premiere of Marc Neikrug's *A Song by Mahler* at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She performs Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Mother Marie) with Houston Grand Opera; the world premiere of Gregory Spears's *Castor and Patience* (Celeste) with Cincinnati Opera; Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* (Judith) with Roanoke Opera; and workshops of Gregg Kallor's new opera *Frankenstein* with Arizona Opera. She joined the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program after winning the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. This is her Philadelphia Orchestra debut.



Soprano **Kelli O'Hara** (Laura Brown), who is making her Philadelphia Orchestra debut, has established herself as one of Broadway's greatest leading ladies. Her portrayal of Anna Leonowens in *The King and I* won the 2015 Tony Award for Best Leading Actress in a Musical, along with GRAMMY, Drama League, Outer Critics, and Olivier nominations. She reprised the role while making her West End debut and performed a limited engagement at Tokyo's Orb Theatre. Other Broadway

credits include *Kiss Me Kate*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *South Pacific*, *The Pajama Game*, and *Follies*. She was awarded the Drama League's Distinguished Achievement in Musical Theatre Award in 2019. She received an Emmy nomination for her portrayal of Katie Bonner in Topic's web series *The Accidental Wolf*, now in its second season, and can be seen starring as Aurora Fane in the HBO series *The Gilded Age*. In 2015 she made her Metropolitan Opera debut in Lehár's *The Merry Widow* and returned as Despina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. Her concerts have gained international acclaim from Carnegie Hall to Tokyo and she is a frequent guest of the New York Philharmonic.



Paula Suozzi (Stage Director) is executive stage director at the Metropolitan Opera, where she has directed revivals of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Mefistofele* and assisted on over 20 productions, collaborating with such directors as Ivo Van Hove, Phelim McDermott, and William Kentridge. She recently developed and implemented the Stage Director and Stage Manager Fellowship training program to help diversify the

people who have access to behind-the-scenes jobs in the operatic industry. As a freelance director she has staged everything from *Twelfth Night* to *The Food Chain* to *Guys and Dolls* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Houston Grand Opera, the Florentine Opera Company, and Bialystock & Bloom, among others. As a coach/teacher, she has contributed to the CoOPERATIVE Program at Westminster Choir College, the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions semi-finalists, and the Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. This summer she will stage *Falstaff* in concert with baritone Bryn Terfel and conductor Patrick Summers at the Aspen Music Festival.



Librettist **Greg Pierce**'s stage works include *Slowgirl*, the inaugural play of Lincoln Center's Claire Tow Theater (LCT3); *Her Requiem*, a Lincoln Center Theater commission produced by LCT3; *Cardinal*, commissioned and produced by Second Stage Theater; and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, co-written with Stephen Earnhart and premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival. His musical works include *The Landing* and *Kid Victory* with music by John Kander, and *The Quarry* with music by his

brother, Randal Pierce. *Fellow Travelers*, an opera with composer Gregory Spears, premiered at Cincinnati Opera and has been presented by the PROTOTYPE festival, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Minnesota Opera. He has received fellowships from the Edward F. Albee Foundation, Yaddo, the Djerassi Institute, the New York Public Library, and the Baryshnikov Arts Center.



Canadian-Italian baritone **Brett Polegato** (Richard) has sung more than 50 operatic roles at the world's most prestigious venues including La Scala, the Glyndebourne Festival, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, and Carnegie Hall. These current performances mark his Philadelphia Orchestra debut. Other highlights of his 2021–22 season include a return to the Bregenz Festival; Brahms's German Requiem with

the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and Ottawa Choral Society; and a Christmas concert featuring excerpts from Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Victoria Symphony. Recent operatic highlights include his debuts at the Metropolitan Opera as Brétigny in Massenet's *Manon* and at the Wexford Festival Opera as Dr. Talbot in William Bolcom's *Dinner at Eight*.



American tenor **Jamez McCorkle** (Leonard) is a trained pianist and singer. Following his time at the Zurich International Opera Studio in 2019, he was a finalist in the Neue Stimmen competition and has since made debuts at the Metropolitan Opera, the Israel Philharmonic, Michigan Opera Theatre, and the Bavarian State Opera; these current performances mark his Philadelphia Orchestra debut. Additional highlights of this season include his house and role

debut as Telemaco in a new production of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* with Theater Basel and the title role in the world premiere of Rhiannon Giddens's opera based on the life of Omar Ibn Said at the Spoleto Festival. Future appearances include debuts with LA Opera, San Francisco Opera, and the Royal Danish Theatre. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music.

Shovne Gray

Vincent Master



Mezzo-soprano **Deborah Nansteel** (Sally) is making her Philadelphia Orchestra debut. She has performed with many of the leading opera companies in the US. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Alisa in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*; her Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Gertrude in Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*; her Carnegie Hall debut in Mozart's *Coronation Mass*; and her New York Philharmonic debut in *In Their Footsteps: Great African American Singers and their*

Legacy. This season's engagements include Filippjevna in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* with Santa Fe Opera, Azucena in Verdi's *Il trovatore* with Toledo Opera, Paula in Catán's *Florencia in the Amazon* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, a return to the Met as Alisa, and her debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic as Rosswisse in Wagner's *Die Walküre*.



Dario Acosta

American bass-baritone **Brandon Cedel** (Dan) made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2012 as the Old Servant in Strauss's *Elektra*. He is a recent graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program and was an ensemble member of Oper Frankfurt. Highlights of his 2021–22 season include the title role in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Glyndebourne Festival, the title role in Handel's *Hercules* at the Karlsruhe Handel Festival, and Zuniga in

Bizet's *Carmen* for Chicago Opera Theater. He has sung Masetto in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Metropolitan Opera and the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Argante in Handel's *Rinaldo* at the Glyndebourne Festival; and the title role in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* for Opera Philadelphia.



Simon Pauly

American tenor **William Burden** (Louis) has appeared on the world's leading operatic stages including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Paris Opera, and La Scala. His symphonic appearances include the Chicago, San Francisco, and BBC symphonies, and he has toured Europe with Les Arts Florissants. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1997 in Handel's *Messiah*. Recordings include Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with Michael Tilson

Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony (SFS Media) and Barber's *Vanessa* with the BBC Symphony (Chandos). He also appeared in the Metropolitan Opera's *Live in HD* broadcast of Thomas Adès's *The Tempest*. He received his master's degree from Indiana University and serves on the faculty at the Juilliard School and the Mannes School of Music.



Soprano **Sylvia D'Eramo** (Kitty/Vanessa), who is making her Philadelphia Orchestra debut, returns to the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program this season. Originally scheduled to make her mainstage debut as Diane in the Met's cancelled production of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, she instead debuted as Countess Ceprano in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. She also returns to Santa Fe Opera as a principal artist to make her role debut as Micaëla in

Bizet's *Carmen*. Last summer she made her role debut as Mimi in Puccini's *La bohème* with the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, where she was also awarded the Thierry Mermod Prize. She is a Lois Alba Aria Competition winner and can be heard on Albany Records's 2017 recording of Robert Ward's *The Crucible* as Abigail Williams.



Soprano **Raven McMillon** (Barbara/Mrs. Latch) is a native of Baltimore. As a second-year Houston Grand Opera Studio Artist, she is seen this season as Frasquita in Bizet's *Carmen*, Peter in Joel Thompson's *The Snowy Day*, and Papagena in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. She also makes several company and role debuts including Pamina in *The Magic Flute* with Des Moines Metro Opera and Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto* with Opera Philadelphia. Last summer she joined Cincinnati Opera

as Frasquita in *Carmen* and made her role debut as Rosina in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* at Opera Steamboat. She returns to Cincinnati Opera in summer 2022 as Musetta in Puccini's *La bohème* and Ruthie in the world premiere of Gregory Spears's *Castor and Patience*. These current performances mark her Philadelphia Orchestra debut.



Tenor **Richard Troxell** (Walter/Michael) has sung leading roles at opera houses and concert halls around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, LA Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and Houston Grand Opera. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2004 in Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* under the direction of Carlos Kalmar. His career has ranged from starring as Pinkerton in Martin Scorsese's film of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, to singing Don José in

Bizet's *Carmen* at the Sydney Opera House, to directing opera at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. He has sung the National Anthem for Major League Baseball's American League Championship Series, shared the stage with opera stars Denyce Graves and Roberto Alagna, and costarred on Broadway with Melissa Errico.



Chinese countertenor **Chuanyuan Liu** (Man Under the Arch/Hotel Clerk) is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut. He was a national semi-finalist in the 2020–21 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (now the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition). Additional highlights of the 2021–22 season include his Toledo Symphony debut in Handel's *Messiah*; his Pittsburgh Opera debut as the Priest/Medium in the world premiere of Christopher Cerrone's *In a Grove*; and

the roles of Cardinal 1/Oracle 1 in Philip Glass's *Galileo Galilei* at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. He is a graduate of Bard College-Conservatory of Music and is pursuing his artist diploma in Opera Vocal Performance at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.



Boy soprano **Jonah Serotta** (Richie) is in sixth grade at Rosa International Middle School in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and sings with the Philadelphia Boys Choir. He recently played Amahl in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with Three Oaks Opera and understudied the Shepherd Boy in Philadelphia Opera Company's production of Puccini's *Tosca* last spring. He is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. He studies voice with Michael Ashby of

the Philadelphia Vocal Conservatory and piano with Dina Evelson. He is a fan of classic American folk music and also loves baseball, tennis, geography, and learning about other parts of the United States.



Mezzo-soprano **Chelsea Laggan** (Nelly/Heather) is a fourth-year resident artist at the Academy of Vocal Arts, where her roles have included Olga in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Marcellina in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Other roles include Third Lady in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* for Opera North, Flora in Verdi's *La traviata* for Capitol Opera Harrisburg, and Alisa in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Prince Orlofsky in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* for New York

Opera Exchange. These current performances are her Philadelphia Orchestra debut. She was a 2020 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions District Winner and recipient of a 2017 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Encouragement Award. She has a B.S. in vocal performance and an M.S. in education from Hofstra University.



Boy soprano **Thomas FitzGerald** (Julian) is making his stage and Philadelphia Orchestra debuts in *The Hours*. He is in the fifth grade at Saint Margaret School in Narberth, where he also sings in the church choir. A proud member of the Keystone State Boychoir, he is a budding piano player, active in school sports, and recently won honorable mention in the Charlotte Miller Simon Poetry Contest.



Boy soprano **Elliot Brown** (Quentin) is currently in the fifth grade at Adaire Elementary School in Philadelphia and is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut. He will soon move on to the Girard Academic Music Program, furthering his studies in the arts. He is a performer in the Philadelphia Boys Choir and is studying piano. In his spare time he is an avid reader, film buff, and stop-motion animator. He loves the Beatles and is passionate about learning history.



Devan Truax (Quentin), who is making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut, is a seventh grader living in Garnet Valley, Pennsylvania. He has enjoyed singing from his earliest days and joined Seattle's Northwest Boychoir at the age of five. A highlight of his six years there included singing with the Seattle Symphony. After moving to the East Coast, he joined the Philadelphia Boys Choir. He's excited to accompany them on tour in Puerto Rico this summer.



Soprano **Sarah Shoff** (Angelica) is a student at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy. Recent performances include *A Murder Is Announced* and *Theory of Relativity* with Springside Chestnut Hill's Players and Puccini's *Suor Angelica* with Opera Box. In addition, she sings with Springside's Chamber Singers and Laurelei, as well as with the Pennsylvania Girlchoir. This is her Philadelphia Orchestra debut.



Soprano **Sydney Parson** (Angelica), who is making her Philadelphia Orchestra debut, has recently appeared as a featured dancer and ensemble member in *Something Rotten!* at the Haverford School; Molly in *Peter and the Wolf* at the Haverford School; and a dancer and choral ensemble member in the off-Broadway production of *The Little Dancer*. She has been a member of the Commonwealth Youthchoirs' Pennsylvania Girlchoir for six years, including on

international tours to Sweden, South Africa, and Australia. She is a senior at Merion Mercy Academy and is looking forward to pursuing mechanical engineering at the Colorado School of Mines in the fall.



The **Philadelphia Symphonic Choir** made its debut in December 2016, performing in three programs with The Philadelphia Orchestra that season. Consisting of talented vocalists auditioned from around the country, the ensemble was created to marry gifted and unique voices of Philadelphia and beyond with the legendary Philadelphia Sound. The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir is directed by Joe Miller, chair of choral studies at the University of Cincinnati. From 2006 to 2020 he

served as conductor of two of the most renowned choral ensembles in the United States: the Westminster Choir and the Westminster Symphonic Choir. He has also served as director of choral activities at Westminster Choir College of Rider University. He has been artistic director of choral activities for the Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, SC, since 2007.

The Music

The Hours

Kevin Puts

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, January 3, 1972

Now living in Yonkers, New York



David White

Already with his debut opera *Silent Night*, performed at Minnesota Opera in 2011, Kevin Puts was hailed as one of America's most significant composers. Subsequent scores have continued to impress with sophisticated lyricism, masterful orchestration, intricate detail, and heightened emotional impact.

A Pulitzer Prize–Winning Score *Silent Night* won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize and was praised by the *New York Times* as "exhilarating and compelling." It brought attention to

Puts as a possible successor to Samuel Barber, Gian Carlo Menotti, Carlisle Floyd, Philip Glass, and John Adams. "With this remarkable debut, Puts assumes a central place in the American opera firmament," wrote *Opera News* of the piece, which featured a libretto by Mark Campbell based partly on the film *Joyeux Noel*, drawn from true accounts of a spontaneous Christmas Eve cease-fire during World War I.

Puts and Campbell followed this with *The Manchurian Candidate* in 2015, which was praised for shedding new light on Richard Condon's 1959 novel. Puts's third opera, *Elizabeth Cree*, set in Victorian London and based on Peter Ackroyd's novel, was performed by Opera Philadelphia and Chicago Opera Theater. John von Rhein wrote in the *Chicago Tribune* that "not since *Sweeney Todd* have operatic blood, guts and dismemberment been so entertaining."

Puts's latest opera, inspired by Michael Cunningham's Pulitzer Prize–winning novel *The Hours* and the subsequent film, and set to a libretto by Greg Pierce, interweaves three stories from different time periods that are all connected, in some way, to Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. The work is a co-commission between The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera.

A Distinctive Lyrical Style Puts was born in St. Louis but was raised mostly in tiny Alma, Michigan, where his father was a mathematics professor and his mother an English teacher. At the Eastman School of Music, he studied composition with Samuel Adler and Joseph Schwantner, and at Yale University he was a pupil of Nelita True (piano) and Christopher Rouse (composition). He also cites William Bolcom, Bernard Rands, and Jacob Druckman as vital influences.

Puts's musical output includes orchestral works, chamber music, and numerous concertos for various solo instruments. His scores have been commissioned and

performed by Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Evelyn Glennie, the New York Philharmonic, the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, and the orchestras of Cincinnati, Detroit, Atlanta, St. Louis, Colorado, Houston, and Minnesota, among others.

Puts has received a Barlow Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Rome Prize, and awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was composer in residence for Young Concert Artists and the Fort Worth Symphony, and he has served on the faculties of the University of Texas at Austin and the Peabody Institute. Currently he is director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer's Institute.

A Closer Look The composer has written the following about the new opera:

Why *The Hours*? In May 2017, I was in the midst of crafting a libretto for *The Brightness of Light*, a multi-media work for Renée Fleming and Rod Gilfry based on the letters of Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz. I had also been at work on a chamber opera called *Elizabeth Cree*, set to premiere at Opera Philadelphia that September and had begun to think about working on another grand opera.

I asked Ms. Fleming about her interest in developing something together. She was receptive to the idea, and on the phone, she casually mentioned a recent lunch with actor Julianne Moore, for whom she had provided the singing voice for the film adaptation of Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto*. She said, "You know what would be wonderful is something that takes place in different time periods all at once, like *The Hours*." (Ms. Moore plays Laura Brown in the film adaptation of Michael Cunningham's Pulitzer Prize-winning book.)

This set my mind awirl with musical possibilities—duets and trios crossing time and space, a rich sound world of orchestral and choral textures magnifying emotion on a grand scale—with the radiant Ms. Fleming as Clarissa Vaughn, who believes hosting the perfect party can save her beloved Richard from dying of AIDS.

—Paul J. Horsley

The Hours was composed from 2019 to 2021.

These are the world premiere performances of the concert version of the opera.

The score calls for three flutes (III doubling alto flute and piccolo), two oboes, English horn, three clarinets (III doubling E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet), also saxophone, three bassoons (III doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets (I doubling piccolo trumpet), three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, crash cymbals, crotales, drum set, glockenspiel, mark tree, marimba, sizzle cymbal, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tambourine, tam-tam, tom-toms, triangle, tuned gongs, vibraphone, waterphone, wood block, xylophone), two harps, piano (doubling celesta), strings, vocal soloists, and a mixed choir.

The Hours runs approximately 2 hours, 10 minutes.

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