


THE AMERICAN OPERA PROJECT AND  
THE NYU TISCH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS'  
GRADUATE MUSICAL THEATRE WRITING PROGRAM &  
DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN FOR STAGE & FILM PRESENT

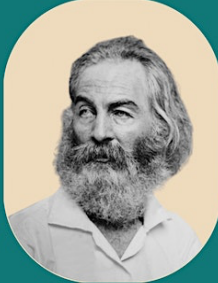
# AOP-NYU/TISCH OPERA LAB SPRING 2023

POETS OF NEW YORK:  
Operas inspired by



**AUDRE  
LORDE**

Presented by  
{ AOP - NYU/Tisch Opera Lab }



**WALT  
WHITMAN**

&

**THU. MAY 25, 2023 | 7:30pm ET**  
**FRI. MAY 26, 2023 | 5:30pm ET**

NYU Shubert Theatre; 721 Broadway, 5th Floor,  
New York, NY 10003

AOP-NYU/Tisch Opera Lab presents **POETS OF NEW YORK: Operas inspired by Audre Lorde & Walt Whitman**, three 30-minute operas inspired by the lives, histories, and geographies of Audre Lorde and Walt Whitman—two queer poets with deep roots in New York City who lived a century apart.

soon implodes against now  
like an iron wall  
my eyes are blocked with rubble

**-Audre Lorde**

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won

**-Walt Whitman**

In our inaugural year, the Opera Lab featured a Walt Whitman character. In May 2016, a new partnership, AOP & NYU/Tisch, produced operas on a stage in Fort Greene Park, titled “Park and Bark”. Walt shared the spotlight with dog walkers, park workers, and Revolutionary War ghosts, all of whom linger in the leafy alleys.

In my job at the Fort Greene Park Conservancy office, we shared space with The Audre Lorde Project and over years I absorbed their literature inspired by the great activist poet. In my mind, Lorde became one of the formidable literary figures encountered in Brooklyn.

Walt Whitman and Audre Lorde are integral to understanding the culture of Fort Greene, Brooklyn. The poets’ legacies conspire to influence a thriving community and a vibrant ecosystem of artists. This is the theme that inspires the talented participants of the Opera Lab, 2023.

The Opera Lab’s group of artists remind me of a story from *The New Yorker*. A journalist shows up at 99 Ryerson Street, Fort Greene—the address of the only extant structure inhabited by Walt Whitman. The journalist proclaims to the young student living there: “*in this building, more than a century ago, ‘the Greatest of American poets had once lived.’*” *Without hesitation the student replies: “How do you know there isn’t a great poet living here now?”* How do we know? It might be. It has happened before. – **Charles Jarden, Interim General Director**

Opera Lab Co-Directors

**Randall Eng**, Associate Arts Professor of NYU Tisch School of the Arts'  
Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program

**Sam Helfrich**, Associate Arts Professor of NYU Tisch School of the Arts'  
Design for Stage & Film

Directed by Sam Helfrich  
Music Direction by Jeremy Chan

Stage Manager – W. Wilson Jones  
Production Manager – Tyler (TJ) Rubin

**POETS OF NEW YORK** operas created in NYU Tisch School of the Arts  
Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program's Advanced Opera Lab

Theatrical design by students from  
NYU/Tisch Department of Design for Stage and Film

Singers and Music Director provided by The American Opera Project

Special thanks to Karen Karbiener, The Walt Whitman Initiative and  
The Audre Lorde Project.

Additional special thanks to Dean Allyson Green, Robert Lee, Justin  
Townsend, Hali Alspach, Alecia Baxter, Amy Burgess, Barbara Cokorinos,  
David Fraley, Joel Kalow, Danny Larsen, Emma Luyendijk, Caitlin Mead,  
Steven Pisano, Rocky Sellers, and Ziyang Yang.

This year's Tisch Opera Lab performances are dedicated to the memory of Sarah Schlesinger, the longtime chair of the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program and the Associate Dean of the Institute of Performing Arts at Tisch. Sarah's vision was instrumental to the creation of an opera-specific curriculum at GMTWP in 2009, and to the founding of the Opera Lab in 2015. She was a tireless champion of this project, and we are forever grateful for her support.

## THE WALT WHITMANS OF FORT GREENE PARK

MUSIC BY ZACHARY CATRON  
LIBRETTO BY PEYTON MARION  
SET DESIGN BY JOYCE HE  
COSTUME DESIGN BY CAMILLE CHARARA  
LIGHTING DESIGN BY ANDRE SEGAR

THURSDAY / MaKayla McDonald, Soprano  
TUESDAY / Jordan Rutter-Covatto, Countertenor  
MONDAY / Nathaniel Sullivan, Baritone  
WEDNESDAY / Eliam Ramos, Bass-Baritone

It's a sunny Friday in Fort Greene Park, and despite a careful agreement forbidding their being there on Fridays, four Walt Whitman impressionists show up to claim more busking turf. A contemporary opera buffa, *The Walt Whitmans of Fort Greene Park* explores Walt Whitman's legacy, hero worship, and what lengths people are willing to go to for an extra buck.

## WEST LOVE '89

MUSIC BY SEAN HAVRILLA  
LIBRETTO BY TROY DEFOUR  
SET DESIGN BY CHARLOTTE SHI  
COSTUME DESIGN BY CAMILLE CHARARA  
LIGHTING DESIGN BY ANDRE SEGAR

MAYA / MaKayla McDonald, Soprano  
HARA / Gileann Tan, Soprano  
BAHARNABÉ / Patrice Eaton, Mezzo-soprano  
QUEEN OMATZ & NAMELESSLUV / Shafiq Hicks, Baritone

In 1989, West Berlin, A Black-German woman named Baharnabé discovers Audre Lorde's ADEFRA activist group and her self identity through writing poetry. But, Baharnabé feels she is no writer or poet. In learning how to write her own story, she travels through time and memory while losing love and falling in love. But, ultimately she discovers her identity in what Audre Lorde has called 'Afro-German'.

## THE PEOPLE VS. AMERICAN CHEESE

MUSIC BY DURRA LEUNG  
LIBRETTO BY CLARE FUYUKO BIERMAN  
SET DESIGN BY BRIAN BERNHARD  
COSTUME DESIGN BY SIENA ZOË ALLEN  
LIGHTING DESIGN BY ANDRE SEGAR

CLARE / Gileann Tan, Soprano  
AUDRE LORDE / Patrice Eaton, Mezzo-soprano  
DURRA / Jordan Rutter-Covatto, Countertenor  
WALT WHITMAN / Nathaniel Sullivan, Baritone

Audre, Walt, Durra, and Clare wake up surrounded by rubble, their gay cruise under attack. The culprit? The greatest danger of all— heteronormativity (in the form of American Cheese). As our unlikely heroes battle cheese slices, they must also battle one another for cultural relevance and icon status. Chaos reigns in this gay fantasia on gayer themes.

# PERFORMER AND PRODUCTION BIOS

## WRITERS

**Clare Fuyuko Bierman** is a playwright and lyricist raised in a Japanese-Jewish home with some rabbits, a snake, and a bunch of finches. Her writing often involves ecological absurdism, politicized food, campfire stories, made-up games, unexpected sea shanties, and proscenium-less playspaces. Recent work: *Yoko's Husband's Killer's Japanese Wife, Gloria* (commissioned by 5th Avenue Theater 2021, Civilians R&D 2022, O'Neill NMTC 2023), *Theseus and the Minotaur and the Other Six* (commissioned by Youth Theater Northwest 2021), and *The People vs. American Cheese* (The American Opera Project 2023). Immersive work includes *VISARE* (New Voices Winner 2020, Vivace Award Nomination 2021) and *[untitled hat project]* (NYFA grant 2021). She has participated in the Johnny Mercer Songwriters Project, the Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Play Festival, and Broadway's Future Songbook Series. BA University of San Francisco, Environmental Studies. MFA New York University, Musical Theater Writing.

**Zachary Catron** is an award-winning composer, lyricist, and performer who bridges the gap between new opera and musical theatre. New York City premieres include the ballet *Training in Love* (Rovaco Dance Company) and the full-length musical *The Battle, Not the War*. A composer of many styles, Catron released his first J-pop single, "Tokimeki (Heart Pounding)", in November with lyrics by Momo Akashi and vocals by Joo Won Shin (*Squid Game*). His new Carnatic-Western-fusion musical, *Sati: Goddess Incarnate* (book & lyrics by Vaibu Mohan), will premiere in concert at Feinstein's/54 Below on July 1. Catron received his off-off- and off-Broadway songwriting debuts in the Spring of 2022 with *WAR STORIES* at The Tank NYC, and Village Songs at the Rattlestick Theater (in collaboration with the Tenement Museum). He has composed for film and TV, including the indie film *La Dame de Monte-Carlo* (Arthouse Film Festival 2021 Official Selection). [www.zacharycatron.com](http://www.zacharycatron.com)

**Troy Defour** is a West Indian-North American Librettist and lyricist whose works encompass the myriads and perspectives of black life, globally. Recent works include; *Burnt Victory* (Obsidian Theatre Playwrights Unit) *Homosexuals* (NYC Fresh Fruit Festival), *Don't Judge Me - A Short Kink Opera* (Tisch/AOP), *Borderless* (Loose Tea Music Theatre), *Black Father Black Son* (Loose Tea Music Theatre), *MAZE* (The American Opera Project). Recent Director credits include: *True Dating Stories* (FUSE TV, CBC Gem, 2021) *Love, Black Love - A Concert* (SITC Musical Productions, 2022), *birthday, birthday, birthday* (Columbia New Plays Festival, Assistant Director, 2022), *Opera Makers* (Canadian Opera Company, Short Documentary, 2023) *Nightingale of A Thousand Songs* (Canadian Opera Company - Observing Director 2023), *Kinky Boots* (Drayton Entertainment, Assistant Director, 2023). Troy is excited to continue to grow as a musical theatre and opera writer. Thank you to Randall Eng and the production team for this experience. Thank you to Sean Havrilla for their dedication and creativity.

**Sean Havrilla** (he/him) is an accomplished composer, lyricist, playwright, and orchestrator based in NYC. His varied works in theater include *Sixty-Seven Moons* (a musical after the paintings of Edward Hopper, with Hali Alspach), *Inside* (an opera, with Peyton Marion) *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (with Michael Radi, presented by Bristol Valley Theater October

2018), *Correctional* (with Sam Chanse), *But, What if I Asked You A Question Using Only Twelve Words?* (a play in 4 scenes with music), and others. He has also written numerous instrumental works ranging from solo piano to large orchestra, as well as electronic music. He holds degrees from Texas Tech University and NYU Tisch School of the Arts, and was a participant in the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop.

**Durra Leung** is a multilingual musical theatre (and now opera!) writer. Durra has presented his original musical works at NYC venues including 54 Below, Joe's Pub, The Green Room 42, The Tank, Symphony Space, and many others. Since 2019, Durra has been a part of the creative team of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* as the Cantonese lyricist. He also composes scores for films including *Your Smile* (dir. Haochen Yang) which was in the Cannes Film Festival in 2020. Durra has served as the founder and host for *Tin Pan Alley 2 Concert Series*, the Line Producer for Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Associate Producer for PROTOTYPE Festival. Durra is an alum of NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program as a composer, and a current member of BMI Musical Theatre Workshop as a librettist. Born and raised in Guangzhou, China, he now calls NYC home. [durraleung.com](http://durraleung.com)

Hailing from the North Carolina Foothills, lyricist, librettist, and playwright **Peyton Marion** (she/her/hers) enjoys a multi-faceted career as a creator and educator. Peyton holds a degree in Voice from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. In addition to her background as a classical musician, Peyton is also well-versed in musical theater, country, bluegrass, and sacred music. In 2019, she relocated to New York City after receiving a Kenan Fellowship to continue honing her skills as a writer and teaching artist at Lincoln Center. She made her New York City and Lincoln Center debut as librettist for *The Project*, an original chamber opera, created with composer Dak Van Vranken. Peyton completed her MFA in 2022 at New York University's Musical Theater Writing Program. Her Master's thesis, *Swear by the Moon*, written alongside composer Caitlin Thomas, debuted at Feinstein's/54Below in November 2022. Her newest work, *The Walt Whitmans for Fort Greene Park*, written with composer Zachary Catron, was created for NYU Tisch and The American Opera Project's Advanced Opera Lab.

## DESIGNERS

**Siena Zoë Allen** is a New York based costume designer invested in sustainable practice. Her work can most recently be seen at NYU Tisch while pursuing her MFA in Stage & Film Design. Other NYC design credits include: *The Last 5 Years* (Streaming, Out of the Box Theatrics), *Acedia: An Apocalypse Trilogy* (The Brick), world premiere musicals *Bastard Jones*, *The Evolution of Mann*, and *Shoes & Baggage* (the cell), *Love & Yogurt* (TheatreLab), *Crackskull Row* (Irish Repertory Theater), *VEIL'D* (APAC, Women's Project), Calderon's *Two Dreams* (La Mama), *The McGowan Trilogy* (NYC, UK). Broadway Associate credits include *Hadestown* & *What the Constitution Means to Me*. Zoë is a proud member of USA 829. More at [www.sienazoeallen.com](http://www.sienazoeallen.com)

**Brian Bernhard** is a New York based designer and theatre artist. He is currently pursuing his MFA in Set Design at NYU Tisch. Previous design credits include: *The Antelope Party* (Dutch Kills); *Eureka Day* (Colt Coeur); *Suicide Forest* (Set Assoc.; Bushwick Starr, Ma Yi); *Ludic*

*Proxy* (Set Assoc.; Japan Society); *Leap and the Net Will Appear* (New Georges); *Zoetrope, Octopus' Garden* (Caborca); *Il re pastore* (Staller Center for The Arts).

**Camille Charara**, costume designer, is a NYU MFA candidate studying costume design and a graduate of The University of Michigan with a BA in Art & Design and a BFA in Theatre Design & Production. She is a NYC based designer and artist. Upcoming: Catskills Mountain Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, NYU Theatrical Production's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Regional: *A Host of People's Food and Fadwa*, RedHouse Arts Center's *I'm Not Rappaport and I Do, I Do!*, Waterworks Theatre's *The Tempest, Othello*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*, Kickshaw's *The Ding Dongs* and *Milvotchkee, Visconsin*. Educational: NYU Theatrical Production's *Major Barbara*, Waterwell's *Everybody*, U-M Theatrical Production's *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Drowsy Chaperone, Così Fan Tutte*, and *The Arabian Nights*. Film Shorts: *Innerworld, Seeking Man*, and *Drive the Night Away*. Instagram and TikTok @camille.charara

**Zhuosi "Joyce" He** is a scenic and production designer, born and raised in China. She is a 2nd year MFA student at NYU Tisch's Design for Stage and Film program. She also holds a BA degree in Film Studies and Architectural Studies from Mount Holyoke College, MA. Combining her passion in architecture and storytelling, she hopes to create worlds and theatrical experiences that envelop audiences in a rich and honest way. Recent design works include *Northbound Train* (Columbia University, Shapiro Theater), *En Andersson/en domstol* (NYU, Shubert & Walker Theater), *Relicts* (NYU Dance).

**Andre Segar** is an African American world-traveling Lighting Designer. He is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama with a BFA in Lighting Design. Now residing in New York, Andre attends NYU in Tisch's Design for Stage and Film pursuing his MFA. Before pursuing his BFA and MFA in Lighting Design, he spent over a decade traveling the world with touring companies such as Royal Caribbean Cruise Line International; Feld Entertainment; and NetWorks Entertainment where he worked on shows such as *Disney on Ice; Marvel Universe Live*; and *Dirty Dancing the Musical*, respectively. His work has been seen and supported by Williamstown Theater Festival, The Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans, The Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Manhattan Theater Club at the Samuel J. Friedman Theater, Playwrights Horizon, The Brick, The Eddy Theater at Chatham University, Helen Wayne Rauh Theater at Carnegie Mellon University, and the Tisch Dance Program at NYU in the Jack Crystal Theater.

**Junran "Charlotte" Shi** (she/her) is a M.F.A. set and production designer in NYU. With the background of Architecture, she is using space, structure and materials as powerful tools for storytelling in theater and film. Themes commonly seen in her works are nature, humanity and culture.

## PERFORMERS

**Jeremy Chan** (Music Director) is a freelance Australian pianist and vocal coach based in New York City. His playing has been praised as "superb" and for "summoning about as much color as can possibly be coaxed out" (New York Classical Review). Jeremy is on staff at Juilliard and

the Manhattan School of Music, and serves as Director of Music at Advent Lutheran Church. His recent engagements include *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Lakes Area Music Festival, residencies at Yellow Barn, and performances at Wigmore Hall, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall. Together with mezzo soprano Kristin Gornstein, Jeremy's first studio release with the Vertex Duo, "Still", is available on all streaming platforms. The duo are currently working on a second album of all-contemporary music. Jeremy is on the roster of the Brooklyn Art Song Society. Outside of music, Jeremy enjoys yoga, tea, and food adventures. Follow Jeremy @jeremychanpiano and [www.jeremychanpiano.com](http://www.jeremychanpiano.com)

Mezzo-Soprano **Patrice P. Eaton**'s career in opera began as a member of the children's chorus of both the Metropolitan Opera and New York City Opera. Most recently Patrice has performed with OnSite Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Harlem Opera Theater, Opera Ebony, Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center at the White Light Festival, the We Shall Overcome National Tour, at Carnegie Hall and with the National Philharmonic at The Strathmore. Patrice is currently a Master of Music in Voice candidate at The Conservatory at Brooklyn College. She is a proud member of Sigma Alpha Iota Music Fraternity, a Lifetime and National Board Member of the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM) and the Artistic Director of Three on 3 Music.

**Shafiq Hicks** is a sought after vocalist, actor and teacher. A transplant from Philadelphia, to NYC, Hicks is honored to make his AOP Debut. Hicks has sung background for Andrea Bocelli, Sam Smith, and Aretha Franklin. He has been seen as soloist in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Brahms' *Requiem* and Duke Ellington's *Sacred Works*. As an actor, Hicks began touring with the *RENT: The 20th and 25th Anniversary Tours* from 2019, until it's close in 2022, playing Tom Collins. Other credits include recent workshops and regional credits such as AGWE: *Once On This Island* (Summer Theatre of New Canaan), PASTOR: *Call Me From The Grave* (NYC Workshop), and STEW: *Passing Strange* (Long Wharf Theatre). As a teacher, Hicks is a teaching artist with Midori & Friends, and also operates his private voice studio: Vocal Journeys. For more Info on Hicks and his studio, follow him on Instagram @thereal\_shafiq and @vocal.journeys

Soprano **MaKayla McDonald** is an active performer of opera, art song, and new work. This summer, she will premiere the role of Nella Larsen in *Fizz & Ginger* a new opera, by Whitney George and Bea Goodwin. Recent engagements include: *St. Matthew Passion* with Musica Sacra and the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center, faculty recitals at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, New Muses Project at the Kaufman Center presenting a concert of "hidden choral gems and chamber music," concerts with the Boston Camerata, and contemporary works with ChamberQUEER at National Sawdust. MaKayla currently resides in Brooklyn, NY and is an Adjunct Lecturer for the Borough of Manhattan Community College Music and Art Department (BMCC-CUNY). Offstage, you can usually find MaKayla in the kitchen trying a new recipe, cozier up reading a book, or enjoying the sights and foods of NYC!

**Eliam Ramos** is a thrilling Puerto Rican bass-baritone who has performed opera and concert works with companies in the United States, Spain, Israel, Puerto Rico and Mexico. His artistic engagements range from traditional opera such as Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, to Luis Nogales in the zarzuela *Luisa Fernanda*, to symphony concerts such as Fauré's *Requiem* to the title role of the modern composition of *El Cimarrón* by Hans Werner Henze. The Metropolitan Opera Guild featured Mr. Ramos in their Verdi's *Baritones Serie* in their 2022-2023 season. Mr.



Ramos engagements for 2023 include cantatas with the Bach in Baltimore, Brahms' *Requiem* with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, Masetto for Opera in Williamsburg, Belcore from *L'Elisir D'Amore* for Geneva Light Opera, Angelotti from *Tosca* in Michigan, Clif Hardin's *Requiem* for his Carnegie Hall debut, the premier performance of the opera *Song of the Nightingale* with On Site Opera, as well as other solo and duo recitals in the New York area.

**Jordan Rutter-Covatto** is a Vietnamese-American countertenor based in New York City. Rutter-Covatto's practice combines virtuosic vocal technique with method acting processes and Baroque gesture to create performances lauded as "riveting ... frightening to behold" (*Opera News*, *The Turn of the Screw*, 1/5/20) and "[t]he best operatic moments" (WQXR, *Three Way*, 6/16/17). A passionate performer of Baroque repertoire, Rutter-Covatto has performed in major works nationwide and co-curated a series of Handelian opera scenes at the 53rd St. Library in New York. Rutter-Covatto is a sought-after collaborator for contemporary operas and new music, having worked with New York City's leading operatic development companies. Rutter-Covatto has also appeared in New York City's theater scene, working off-Broadway, at Columbia University's New Plays Festival, and in new musicals in development. Rutter-Covatto prides himself on bringing classical music outside of its traditional boundaries, working with MET LiveArts, the Duplex Cabaret, and the High Line Park.

An "alert and highly musical baritone" (*Opera News*), **Nathaniel Sullivan** infuses his work with "impressive strength and precision" (*Schmopera*), as well as "great eloquence" (*ConcertoNet*) and "allegiance to both music and words" (*ConcertoNet*). Upcoming season highlights: bass soloist in the *St. Matthew Passion* with the Blanche Moyse Chorale (October 2023); bass soloist in Fauré's *Requiem* with the Quad City Symphony Orchestra (March 2024); Jesus/bass soloist in the *St. John Passion* at First-Plymouth Church (March 2024). Recent highlights: The King in George Benjamin's *Lessons in Love and Violence* at Tanglewood (North American premiere); Manfred in Jake Heggie's *Two Remains* (Out of Darkness) with the Quad City Symphony Orchestra; Harvey Milk (cover) in Stewart Wallace's *Harvey Milk Reimagined* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (world premiere). Nathaniel received his BM from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2014) and his MM from the Bard College Conservatory of Music (2017). [nathanielsullivan.com](http://nathanielsullivan.com)

**Gileann Tan** is a Filipino-American soprano based in the New York metropolitan area. Her past roles include Gretel in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Amore in Glück's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the Baker's Wife in Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, and Amina in scenes from Bellini's *La sonnambula*. She competed in the Vassar College Concerto Competition where she received the Lucia V. Torian '69 Prize, the Kneisel German Lieder Competition (finalist), and the Friends of Eastman Opera Theater Competition (finalist). Sacred works include Handel's *Messiah* and *Dixit Dominus*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, *BWV 199*, *BWV 78*, and Bach's *Mass in B Minor*. Last year, Gileann made her professional operatic debut as Dormouse and Alice cover in City Lyric Opera's production of *The Garden of Alice* by Elizabeth Raum. Gileann studies with Greta Damrau and is the Soprano II Section Leader at First Presbyterian Church in Stamford, CT.

## PRODUCTION

**Randall Eng** (Lab Co-Director) founded and leads the AOP - NYU/Tisch Opera Lab with Sam Helfrich. Under their guidance, students from the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program have created more than 50 short operas. As a composer, Randall's music lies at the intersection of opera, music-theatre, and jazz. His short opera *Norfolk* premiered in April with White Snake Projects, alongside his *Fractured Mosaics Interludes*. His operas *Florida*, *Before the Night Sky*, and *Henry's Wife* have been performed at UrbanArias, Lyric Opera Cleveland, New York City Opera's VOX Festival, the American Opera Project, the Virginia Arts Festival, the Center for Contemporary Opera, and Manhattan School of Music. Recent non-theatrical compositions include *Harbor* for the Boston Pops, *Miracles* for Mirror Visions Ensemble, and the choral work *Remain* for MasterVoices. Randall is a graduate of Harvard University, Cambridge University, and NYU/ Tisch's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, where he is now an Associate Arts Professor.

**Sam Helfrich** (Director and Lab Co-Director) BA (Russian Literature), M.F.A. (Theatre Arts) Columbia University. Sam Helfrich is an opera and theater director based in New York. He has directed opera productions at New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Portland Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Spoleto Festival/USA, Virginia Opera, Opera Boston, Pittsburgh Opera, and Wolf Trap, among others. Theater credits include various off-broadway and regional productions. His recent production of Péter Eötvös' operatic adaptation of *Angels in America* for New York City Opera was recently remounted at the Salzburg Landestheater.

**W. Wilson Jones** (Stage Manager) has staged managed the world premieres of AOP-developed operas- *As One*, *Harriet Tubman*, *Out Cold*, *Patience & Sarah*, *Romulus* and more than two dozen operas created in the NYU/Tisch opera lab since 2016, as well as AOP workshops of *Heart of Darkness*, *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*, *Before Night Falls*, *Darkling*, *Tone Test*, *Paul's Case*, and *Summer King*, among many others. Among the over 100 productions stage managed with the AVA Opera Theater, Opera Company of Philadelphia, and other Philadelphia area companies, are several PBS telecasts. Mr. Jones is a lifetime member of the Stage Managers' Association and a retired Associate Curator on the faculty of the New York University Libraries.

**TJ Rubin** (Production Manager) is a composer and music educator who tells stories onstage that reflect the wide variety of queer experiences and narratives the world holds. TJ's music lives at the intersection of opera and musical theater, with melodies that are "torquing, and probing, quizzical and wonderstruck" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*). Recent works include *Ten Minutes in the Life or Death of...* (libretto by Marella Martin Koch), *How To Create A Young Girl* (book and lyrics by Laura Barati), *Back to the Shore: A Jersey Short Opera* (libretto by Mika Kauffman) and *Nightlife* (libretto by Deepali Gupta), which premiered at the Stonewall Inn as part of a collaboration between NYU and AOP for the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. He is on faculty at Montclair State University and William Paterson University. He is also a composer in the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop. MFA: New York University, Musical Theatre Writing.

## **About the NYU Tisch School of the Arts**

For over 50 years, the NYU Tisch School of the Arts has drawn on the vast artistic and cultural resources of New York City and New York University to create an extraordinary training ground for the individual artist and scholar of the arts. Today, students learn their craft in a spirited, risk-taking environment that combines the professional training of a conservatory with the liberal arts education of a premier global university with campuses in New York, Abu Dhabi, Shanghai, and 11 academic centers around the world. [www.tisch.nyu.edu](http://www.tisch.nyu.edu)

## **About The American Opera Project**

Celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The American Opera Project (AOP) is at the forefront of the contemporary opera movement through its commissioning, developing, and producing of opera and music theatre projects, community engagement, and training programs for student and emerging composers and librettists including partnerships with NYU Tisch and Hunter College and its in-house, two-year fellowship program, Composers & the Voice, currently entering its twelfth season. [www.aopopera.org](http://www.aopopera.org)

## **Upcoming for the AOP - NYU/Tisch Opera Lab:**

The Climate Change Operas, Fall 2023. Created in the 2019-20 Lab, these 15-minute operas about the climate emergency were scheduled to be presented in Spring 2020 but had their initial production postponed due to the pandemic. The 2023 production is done in collaboration with NYU's Office of Sustainability.

*AOP's training programs are supported in part through a multi-year grant by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and OPERA America's Innovation Grant funded by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.*

*The free public performances of AOP-NYU/Tisch Opera Lab are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and with support from the Howard Gilman Foundation.*