

# The Ghosts of Versailles

Music by **John Corigliano**, Libretto by **William M. Hoffman** (suggested by the play *La Mère coupable* by Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais)



Peter Kazaras



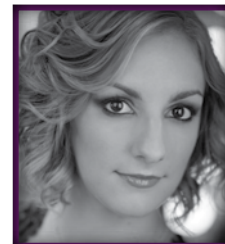
Caitlin Lynch



Daniel Belcher



Marco Nisticò



Aleks Romano



Scott Purcell



Patrick Dean Shelton

**Performance July 27 at 8:15 p.m.**

**Premiere Performance:** The Metropolitan Opera, New York City, 1991

This summer we celebrate Miriam Charney's 25th year on the music staff of the Chautauqua Opera Company. She has an extraordinary passion for contemporary American opera, and her skill with new music has been a blessing for our company. It is with great respect, admiration and gratitude that we dedicate this production of *The Ghosts of Versailles* to Miriam Charney.

— Steven Osgood

## CAST

**Marie Antoinette**

Caitlin Lynch

**Beaumarchais**

Daniel Belcher

**Louis XVI/Suleyman Pasha**

Marco Nisticò+

**Samira**

Aleks Romano+

**Figaro**

Scott Purcell\*

**Bégearss**

Patrick Dean Shelton\*

**Susanna**

Quinn Middleman\*

**Countess Rosina**

Lauren Yokabaskas\*

**Count Almaviva**

Blake Friedman\*

**Florestine**

Natalie Trumm\*

**Léon**

James Stevens\*

**Cherubino**

Antona C. Yost\*

**Wilhelm**

Edwin Joseph\*

**Woman in a Hat/Duchess**

Gabrielle Beteag\*

**Marquis/Page with Crotale**

Jordan Loyd\*

**Gossips**

Cristina María Castro\*, Lindsey Chinn\*,  
Wan Zhao\*

**Opera Box Ghosts**

Lydia Grace Graham^, Gal Kohav^,  
Mathieu Levan^, Brandon Mecklenburg^

**Ensemble**

Michael Colman\*, Matthew Cossack\*,  
Yazid Gray\*, Brian Jeffers\*, Seunghee Lee\*,  
Laura León\*, Jesús Vicente Murillo\*, Sidney  
Ragland\*, Kaitlyn Stavinoha\*, Timothy  
Williams\*

**Supernumeraries**

Nathalie Borden, Kerry Byard, Daniel  
Gefter, Elliana Gefter, Kristine Gefter,  
Samantha Grambow, Jaidyn Janes, Taurin  
Janes, Rob Kobel, Eve Kushmaul, Lydia  
Kushmaul, Ben Lawson, Hannah McBroom,  
Shawn Sprinkle

## CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION

**Conductor**

Steven Osgood

**Stage Director**

Peter Kazaras

**Choreographer/**

Nicola Bowie

**Period Etiquette Consultant**

**Set Designer**

Alan Muraoka

**Lighting/Video Designer**

Michael Baumgarten

**Costume Designer**

B.G. FitzGerald

**Wig & Makeup Designer**

Martha Ruskai

**Chorus Master**

Carol Rausch

**Fight Choreographer**

Dale Anthony Girard

**Fight Captain**

Sara E. Widzer

**Dance Captain**

Cristina María Castro

**Assistant Directors**

Grant Preisser

Sara E. Widzer

**Assistant Conductor**

Jorge Parodi

**Coach/Accompanist**

Miriam Charney

Emily Jarrell Urbanek

**Diction Coach/Supertitles**

Allison Voth

**Technical Director**

John P. Woodey

**Properties Master/Scenic Artist**

Theresa Pierce

**Associate Set Designer**

Shih-Ying Hazel Kuang

**Production Stage Manager**

Valerie K. Wheeler

**Assistant Stage Managers**

Emily Barber

Kendra Green

Amelia Nordin

RoseMary Prodonovich

Vahn Armstrong

**Concertmaster**

## CREDITS

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Scenery constructed by Local #266 I.A.T.S.E

Lighting provided by Advanced Production Group

Wigs provided by Martha Ruskai

Costumes provided by Sarasota Opera and the Chautauqua Opera  
Costume Shop.

Supertitles designed by Allison Voth

+ Chautauqua Opera Debut

\* 2019 Chautauqua Opera Young Artist

^ Chautauqua School of Music Voice Program Student

## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

I was lucky enough to be in the original production of John Corigliano and William M. Hoffman's *The Ghosts of Versailles*, which premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in December 1991. By the time we had our final dress rehearsal, the riotous reception from the audience assured us all that we had a hit on our hands. A masterful mix of period-style music, more contemporary aleatoric techniques and lush romanticism, the score appealed to music lovers of varying tastes. We all felt keenly the responsibility to do our best for this work to succeed — after all, it was the first new opera the Met had produced in 27 years! The creators had set out to fashion a “Grand Opera Buffa” for the Met Opera audience, and they succeeded brilliantly.

The idea of investigating the past in order to forge change for the future is at the very heart of this work, and is reflected in the glorious music of the score. As the composer has stated, “while *The Ghosts of Versailles* is, in part, an entertaining *buffa*, it is also a serious meditation on history and change: specifically, on how change comes about both in politics and in art.”

Returning to *Ghosts* after all these years, it is stunning to consider how our ears have changed. New opera is no longer something that audiences fear. Our hearing has become accustomed to the music of Philip Glass, Missy Mazzoli and Laura Kaminsky, each of whom has been heard here at Chautauqua in recent seasons, along with a host of other talented composers actively expanding the canon. Almost 30 years later, it is gratifying to revisit the many joys of *The Ghosts of Versailles*. The melodies remain poignant and nostalgic, the chaos of the opening is still technically difficult to execute but so worthwhile. And the zany chase scenes involving Figaro are still tough to learn, challenging to stage, but so much fun to see! After so many years, I find myself ever more moved by Marie Antoinette's decision to accept the past for what it was and to move on to what is next.

— Peter Kazaras

## SYNOPSIS

### Act I

In the present, the ghosts of the court of Louis XVI arrive at the theatre of Versailles. Bored and listless, even the King is uninterested when Beaumarchais arrives and declares his love for the Queen. As Marie Antoinette is too haunted by her execution to reciprocate his love, Beaumarchais announces his intention to change her fate through the plot of his new opera *A Figaro for Antonia*.

The cast of the opera-within-the-opera, which follows the familiar escapades of the *Figaro* characters, is introduced. Almaviva is estranged from the Countess, and has realized that their son Léon is in fact the result of an affair that the Countess had with Cherubino. Léon wants to marry Florestine, who has grown up as ward of Count Almaviva, and is actually his illegitimate daughter. The Count has forbidden the union and has promised Florestine instead to Bégearss, the opera's villain.

The opera-within-an-opera, *A Figaro for Antonia* begins in 1793, in the midst of the French Revolution. Figaro enrages the Count by warning him that his trusted Bégearss is a revolutionary spy. Figaro is fired, but overhears Bégearss and his servant Wilhelm hatching a plot to arrest the Count that evening at the Turkish Embassy when he sells Marie Antoinette's necklace to the English Ambassador. Figaro intercepts the plot by infiltrating the party, dressed as a dancing girl. After the outrageous performance by the singer Samira, Figaro steals the necklace from the Count before the sale can take place, and runs away.

### Act II

Figaro returns and defies Beaumarchais's intentions, as he wants to sell the Queen's necklace to help the Almavivas escape France. To put the story back on course, Beaumarchais enters the opera-within-an-opera and shocks Figaro into submission by allowing him to witness the unfair trial of Marie Antoinette, as the present, history and fiction mix together. After the trial, Bégearss manipulates the revolutionaries into a bloodthirsty frenzy.

Meanwhile, at the Almaviva's last ball, Léon and Florestine express their love for each other, and the Count is finally swayed by his wife's wishes. Bégearss arrives with the revolutionaries. Even though Figaro gives Bégearss the queen's necklace, he is enraged and sends the Almaviva family to prison — the same prison in which Marie Antoinette lingers following her trial.

Beaumarchais and Figaro, the only two to have evaded capture, arrive at the prison to try to rescue the Almavivas. They are shortly followed by Bégearss, whom Figaro denounces to the revolutionaries, revealing that he has kept the necklace rather than using it to feed the poor. Bégearss is carried off, the Almavivas escape to America and Beaumarchais is left with the keys to Marie Antoinette's cell. But the power of his love has made Marie accept her fate and she refuses to let Beaumarchais alter the course of history.

# CHAUTAUQUA OPERA ORCHESTRA

## **Violin I**

Vahn Armstrong, *Concertmaster*  
David Hult, *Assistant*  
Erica Robinson  
Ming Gao  
Amanda Gates  
Adrienne Finet  
Anton Shelepov  
Liana Koteva Kirvan  
Heidi Brodwin  
Leslie Anderegg

## **Violin II**

Cynthia Berginc, *Principal*  
Margaret Cooper, *Assistant*  
Karen Lord Powell  
Jonathan Richards  
Heejin Weisbrod  
Irina Shelepov  
Janice Carlson  
Jennifer Jansen

## **Viola**

Christopher Fischer, *Principal*  
Eva Stern, *Assistant*  
Jennifer Stahl  
Kayleigh Miller  
Carrie Fischer  
Brian Walniki

## **Cello**

Jolyon Pegis, *Principal*  
Lars Kirvan, *Assistant*  
Jeff Szabo  
Daryl Goldberg  
Igor Gefter  
Si-Cheng Liu

## **Bass**

Owen Lee, *Principal*  
David Rosi, *Assistant*  
Caitlyn Kamminga  
Ian Saunders

## **Flute**

Kathryn Levy, *Principal*  
Barry Crawford

## **Oboe**

Jan Eberle, *Principal*  
Jason Weintraub

## **Clarinet**

Daniel Spitzer, *Principal*  
Allan Kolsky

## **Bassoon**

Jeffrey Robinson, *Principal*  
Ben Atherholt

## **Horn**

Roger Kaza, *Principal*  
Bill Bernatis

## **Trumpet**

Leslie Linn, *Principal*  
Peter Lindblom

## **Trombones**

Christopher Wolf, *Principal*  
Eric Lindblom

## **Timpani**

Brian Kushmaul, *Principal*

## **Percussion**

Tom Blanchard, *Principal*  
Pedro Fernandez  
Suzanne Fassett Wright

## **Harp**

Beth Robinson

## **Piano/Celesta**

Miriam Charney

## **Synthesizer**

Emily Jarrell Urbanek

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