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TAYLOR UNIVERSITY'S

Mitchell Theatre

PRESENTS

taylor theatre presents
an original english adaption of

the marriage of figaro

a comic opera by mozart

NOV. 13-14, 20-21
8PM

NOV. 15, 22
2PM



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Sometime in the last two years I was asked by Dr. Patricia Roberson to direct an opera. I asked emphatically, “does it bother you at all that I’ve never directed an opera?” She simply replied, “No.” I’m not sure whose idea it was to tackle the icon that is Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*. Perhaps it was mine. If I’m walking all the way to the edge of the cliff anyway, why not just jump? Halfway through casting, I realized there was no safety net. I was casting before I was ready, May 2015, and was asking for all involved to take monumental risks on my choices. Dr. Conor Angell would work as Music Director, Dr. Robertson,

who’s done *Figaro* multiple times, would travel the journey with us, teaching and mentoring along the way. I asked designer Kevin Gawley to join me on the adventure, trusting in his collaborative nature and aesthetic sensibilities. He had designed *Figaro* before so...I was constructing a safety net.

Generally, I knew I needed opera to be accessible to me and those I would share it with. I also needed *Figaro* to be accessible. So, I landed in England, 1912. We would produce it in English and that very difficult recitative would be shifted back into dialogue to help us follow and understand. As I shared the concept with Kevin, we both knew we wanted a maze as the central idea — a shape that holds for me the period of history and the limit of the cluttered mind. I spent most of May reading the original play written in 1778 by Pierre Beaumarchais. This play is the second in the *Figaro* trilogy, preceded by *The Barber of Seville* and followed by *The Guilty Mother* (weird play, I don’t recommend it), while blaring the Mozart recording whenever I found myself alone in the house or my office. I wanted the set design to mirror the web of deceit and confusion that seems to rule this very crazy day, the limiting shape of our knowledge, and our helplessness relating to emotional truth and behavior. Revolutions (the French Revolution is foreshadowed in the original *Figaro*) move us politically forward but emotionally we stay the same. In our setting we are just embarking on WWI; it will begin for England in just two years. I also wanted to be able to tell the story of the servitude of Susanna, which gets lost as a premise in many contemporary *Figaro* settings. We can hear in the music Mozart’s need to place order on the chaos of feeling, his obsession with beauty in sound, and his conviction that artifice can cover more robust realities. My job is to release the chaos from the order of the music so the audience can have the double pleasure of seeing conflict and hearing order. The first days of rehearsal are always terrifying! The space is disorienting and the people unfamiliar. I’m hoping everyone else is just as scared as me. A revolve with walls, doors and windows will be our playground for the next few weeks, but it’s hard to grasp it all in our imaginations. I can feel everyone’s uncertainty and the trust they’ve placed in me that when the time for pieces to come together, they really will.

More and more I feel the opera to be about the folly of time — the positions might all be reversed in a century. How to capture that? *Figaro*’s complexity

begins to be apparent...it's about so very many things: equality, days when things go wrong, vengeance, rights, responsibilities, fidelity and infidelity, forgiveness and restoration. Wedding days are often the context for Greek tragedies. "Days of mirth and madness" — that is one of the last lines of the opera.

The play is a comedy but contains within it so many elements of tragedy and pain. Perhaps we need comedy infused with tragedy. I'm throwing so many ideas at the piece: I wonder which will survive. On November 1st, the singers meet the orchestra and hear each other for the first time. There are 22 living, breathing musicians coming together to play the feelings of these characters. What will this do to the singers? Will they remember what they've rehearsed in their bodies as they sing? The set comes together on November 6th and 7th. We begin to discover and combat the problems and solve them together. I finally feel like we are launching. The singers transform from rehearsal creatures to the pristine silhouettes of their characters. The singers need body memory, and do not find late changes easy. Once it's locked in, they can get on with the Herculean task of singing while appearing to think. Actors usually come to the performance at the last minute, having edited out the options. Some manage to adapt second by second, others bring another new idea every time we play scenes.

The process is, at times, tiring and rehearsals seems dispiriting. I have to change positions to enable the singers to sing. We have costume problems — and it's all so late. I haven't seen everything and I feel things can slide out of control in a second. At the end of tech rehearsal, the sunshine hurts my mole eyes and I go home to snuggle with my family and sit still for a bit. The rest of that day I make no decisions.

On Tuesday night, November 10th, I hear the orchestra tune for the first time. It's like waking a sleeping giant. Suddenly the overture begins, the revolve moves, the impossible starts to happen and off they go! I want the performers to own their parts so that each evening it can happen anew. I want Sean Sele's Figaro, not some other performer's, Daniel Morrison's Bartolo, Abby Palmisano's Barbarina, Terrance Volden's hilarious Basilio, Zachary Cook's fastidious and well-timed Lord Curzio. This has been a hard sell to the singers who long to be told where to stand and just sing. In a time when the theatre is struggling to compete with the internet and forgiveness can seem a sign of weakness, we call you out to be brave enough to engage with this monumental piece and find yourself within it, trying to unravel the confusion, make sense of mercy and wallow in beauty.

--Tracy Manning

MUSIC DIRECTOR



Dr. Conor Angell

Born and raised in Ireland, baritone Conor Angell joined Taylor University's music faculty in the fall of 2013. Previously, he taught at Houghton College and Wabash College. Award winner in the 2013 Chicago Oratorio Competition and 2013 American Prize in Vocal Performance, he has also received awards in the Heafner-Williams Vocal Competition, NATS Competition, and Kentucky Bach Choir Vocal Competition, among others. While completing his doctoral degree at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, he appeared in numerous performances with IU Opera. Before his studies at IU, Angell was a studio artist at Kentucky Opera, singing roles in *Werther*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Otello*, *Don Quichotte*, and *Iolanta*. Angell is an active performer in operas, recitals, and orchestral concerts throughout the eastern and midwestern US. He completed his master's degree at UNC-Greensboro and his bachelor's degree at Taylor University.

Many of our cast members are performing opera for the first time. They, like some audience members, have had to grapple with the question, "what is opera?" The most satisfying answers tend not to be technical; they have to do with opera's ability to reflect and celebrate aspects of life. Opera draws listeners into characters' psyche as well as their external circumstances: the most internal and personal of thought processes are brought to life by the contour and rhythms of vocal melodies and by orchestral color, alongside vivid visual displays. A masterpiece like *The Marriage of Figaro* unites a well-crafted play, which itself elicits a response from viewers, with music that intensifies its dramatic, emotional content. Since taking their first steps toward understanding opera, our cast members have noticed that opera, which clearly requires solid singing technique and musical understanding, is about more than musical accuracy alone. It demands that singers employ enough projection to be heard in a large space, and yet deliver language in a way that is as natural-sounding as possible. It causes singers to embody genuine emotions and motivations that are very different from their own, yet asks that they sing with ease and avoid excessive physical tension while they convey this wide range of emotion. It requires that singers regard memorization of their notes as the very first step, followed by a process of integrating vocalism with movement and expression, so the emotional intent of the character is wedded to beautiful tone.

On this journey, we singers find that freeing our voices from tense habits is a task best undertaken in tandem with the goal of sharing a message more clearly; that singing with a free outpouring of sound is the best way to make oneself a vessel for communication. Singers find themselves repeatedly contemplating their perceived limitations – exploring whether their bodies are unable to do something (such as a ringing high note), or their minds are simply unwilling to allow the body to do it. We also find that collaboration rather than competition is what makes this art form work – not singing louder, higher, or faster than the next singer or instrument, but presenting a uniformly worthy aesthetic offering. This principle is exemplified best in the interaction between the singer and orchestra. While the orchestra pours out more decibel volume than could ever be matched by one human voice, a God-given wonder called “singer’s formant,” by which the sound energy of the operatic voice is distributed across higher harmonic frequencies than orchestral sounds, allows the human voice to be heard above the orchestra and gives the full musical forces a rich combination of timbres. Hence, opera is not about singing loudly. It is about singing (and acting) that “cuts,” as singers say: clear, projected, and efficient, with vitality that has transported audiences to imaginary and yet seemingly real worlds for centuries before video games or movies began to attempt a similar task. Mozart’s opera is an ideal vehicle for singers and audiences to take this journey, as Mozart had an unparalleled combination of skills for writing opera: excellent discernment with quality of text and dramatic structure when choosing a play to set; a superb grasp of the ranges of operatic voice types; brilliant control of orchestral texture combinations; and the ability to convey with music the dramatic mood indicated by the text, or even a subtext that would not be obvious in the text alone.

I love that each musical style and section in this opera fits and enhances the story. As a first-time opera conductor (more accustomed to being a singer!) I relish the challenge before me, the orchestra, and our cast every night, to try to find what makes *Marriage* work: the tempi that propel it fittingly, the dynamics that set the mood, and the synergy and flexible adjustments that make it human. And, most importantly, the audience traveling with us through this mad, musical day.

--Conor Angell

SCENIC & LIGHTING DESIGNER



Kevin Gawley

Kevin is returning to design his 27th production at Taylor. As a freelance lighting/scenic designer, Kevin's work has appeared on many Chicago stages, including Lifeline Theatre where he won the Jeff Citation for his design of *Jane Eyre*, the After Dark Award for his design of *Strong Poison*, and has been an ensemble member and resident designer since 2001. His work also appeared in numerous productions at the Bailiwick, Organic, Porchlight, OperaModa, Blindfaith, Theatre on the Lake, Metropolis,

StoreFront, Loyola University Chicago, Revels Chicago, Midwest Jewish, and at the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival theatres. Kevin is currently Professor and Resident Scenic and Lighting Designer at the University of Louisville and has previously taught courses at Loyola University Chicago, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. He is also a resident designer at St. Scholastica Academy. Kevin holds an MFA and BFA in Lighting Design from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and an MBA in Finance from DePaul University. Kevin's lighting/projection designs were featured summer 2009 at Lifeline Theatre's productions of *Crossing California* and *Gaudy Night*.

MUSIC CONSULTANT



Dr. Patricia Robertson

Patricia Robertson, has served as music director for both the TU Lyric Theater and the Mitchell Theatre since 2002. For the Lyric Theatre she has led performances of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *Dido & Aeneas*, *Bartered Bride*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *La Perichole*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Gondoliers*, and for the Mitchell Theater *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Godspell*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Her directing credits also include productions of *Così fan tutte* and *Dido and Aeneas* for the Anderson

University Opera Theatre. From 1989-1999 she served on the faculty of the Ball State Summer Theatre Festival, a semi-professional repertory company funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. With that company she provided support and direction for such productions as *1776*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Hello Dolly*, *Music Man*, *Oliver*, and *The Secret Garden*.

CHOREOGRAPHER



Kory Lynn Browder

Kory, a graduate of Ball State University with a BS in Dance Performance, has an extensive career as performer, instructor and choreographer. As a current Adjunct Faculty member at Taylor University, Indiana Wesleyan University, and Ballet Instructor at CSA of Marion, Kory's past credits include guest instructor at Ball State University, guest instructor at Regional Dance America, Assistant Artistic Director of Anderson Young Ballet Theatre, and ballet and musical theatre instructor for AYBTA and Dancer's Edge. She has been guest choreographer for Ball State Dance

Theatre and Ball State University Singers, assistant choreographer and director for AYBT's *The Nutcracker Ballet* and *Giselle*, choreographed Taylor University's production of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Godspell*, choreographed IWU's production of *Little Women* and *South Pacific* and she has directed *The Nutcracker Ballet* with CSA for the past two years. Kory has been a member of Carnival Cruise Lines Entertainment, Ball State Dance Theatre, Anderson Young Ballet Theatre, Cedar Point Amusement Parks Entertainment, and Ballet Legere of Chicago. She resides in Marion with her

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR



*Terrance Volden

Terrance is in his fourth year as Taylor Theatre's Technical Director. He graduated from Sterling College in Kansas in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and Theatre Arts. After graduation, he spent almost three years as a missionary outside of Chiclayo, Peru, working for Latin American Children's Fund as a teacher, pastor, and translator. In 2012, he obtained his education licenses in both Theatre and Vocal Music, also from Sterling. His theatre credits include three years as

Scene Shop Supervisor at Sterling College and freelance scene design and construction across Kansas and Oklahoma. His past work at Taylor includes scene designs for *Waiting for Godot*, *Freud's Last Session*, *The Cherry Orchard*, and *Wit*, along with directing *The Servant of Two Masters*.

STAGE MANAGER & ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR



*Leah Murphy- Stage Manager

Leah is a senior Theatre major from Cincinnati. This is her first time stage managing, and she is thankful for what the experience has shown and taught her. She wants to thank Tracy for the phone call last year that started this whole endeavor. Onstage or backstage, Leah has been involved with *The Curious Savage*, *Freud's Last Session*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Servant of Two Masters*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Miracle Worker*, *Tartuffe*, *A Piece of My Heart*, *I Love a Piano*, and *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*. She is a member of the Taylor Touring Company as well and hopes to continue in her pursuit of the Playback Theatre art form.



*Alexis Colón- Assistant to the Director

Alexis Jade Colón is a junior from Lebanon, Ohio, studying theatre and writing. At Taylor, she has performed in *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Miracle Worker*, *Tartuffe*, and *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook* as well as several other shows. Alexis is also a member of Taylor Touring Company and a MESA cabinet member. She would like to extend special thanks to Grace Bolinger.

COSTUME DESIGNER



*Sara Phillips

Sara is blessed to continue to be involved in her 11th season at Mitchell Theatre, serving as the Costume Designer for this production. As a student, Sara was involved in several areas of production but mainly spent her time sewing in the costume shop. Some of her favorite shows to be part of include *Thoroughly Modern Mille*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Odd Couple*. Since her graduation in 2009, she has volunteered in various capacities at Taylor Theatre and loves having the continued opportunity to play in her free time while working for a local textbook company.

CAST

Lord Almaviva
Lady Almaviva
Susanna
Figaro
Cherubino
Marcellina
Dr. Bartolo
Basilio
Curzio
Barbarina
Antonio
Soprano Chorus Soloist
Alto Chorus Soloist

Evan Koons
*Jessica Schulte
Alexis Turner
*Sean Sele
Katie Vogel
Erin Davis
Daniel Morrison
*Terrance Volden
*Zach Cook
Abby Palmisano
*Carter Perry
Megan McKechnie
*Grace Bolinger

Ensemble

Paige Kennedy
Lauren Vock
Ty Kinter
Josh Duch
Bradley Jensen
Hyung Jin Park
Grace Foltz
Nate Aeilts
Charnell Peters

TAYLOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

First Violin - David Blakely* concertmaster, Jamie Bell, Becca Rousseau, Adele Maxfield
Second Violin - Sandra Neel, Anna Brandle, Wren Hays, Hannah Rathbun
Viola - Melissa Schleicher, Savannah Ireland
Cello - Brian Ballinger, Samantha Carlson, Laura Anderson
Bass - Brent Gerig
Flute - Clara Loisch
Oboe - Katie Garringer
1st Clarinet - Erin Roesch
2nd Clarinet - Emily Britton
Bassoon - Mike Trentacosti
1st Horn - Matthew Weidner
2nd Horn - Kileigh Erickson
Timpani - Alec Ellsworth

Lord Almaviva: The lord of the manor.

Lady Rosina Almaviva: Lord Almaviva's wife.

Susanna: Lady's maid and best friend to Rosina. Engaged to Figaro.

Figaro: Valet of Lord Almaviva. Engaged to Susanna.

Cherubino: The ward of Lord Almaviva. Boyfriend of Barbarina.

Marcellina: The one time servant and lover of Dr. Bartolo. Figaro's nanny.

Basilio: Friend of Lord Almaviva and a music instructor.

Curzio: Friend of Lord Almaviva and a less-than-honorable lawyer.

Bartolo: A doctor. Before her marriage, the guardian and thwarted lover of Rosina.

Antonio: Lord Almaviva's gardener. Barbarina's father. Susanna's uncle.

Barbarina: Antonio's daughter. Susanna's cousin. Cherubino's girlfriend.

On Adapting The Marriage of Figaro- Alexis Colón

As an aspiring playwright and director, I was thrilled at the opportunity to work with our directors on the adaption of *The Marriage of Figaro*. After researching the original work of Beaumarchais and Mozart, I received instructions from our directors on what portions of the opera would be changed, then I set to work – cutting, pasting, and translating my way through one of the greatest pieces of music ever written. It was exhilarating and terrifying all at once. By our first cast reading, I had completed several drafts, but even then, my three colored editing pens were flying all over the pages as I listened to the cast read and sing through the piece for the first time. Hearing the characters read aloud by those who would embody those characters changed many of my own ideas of how to script a character. From then on, I made adaptations to the script in the rehearsal room and after rehearsals based on our chosen setting, aesthetic, and what sounded the best to our directors and myself. We viewed our adaption of the libretto very much the same way we viewed the production process: allowing flux and providing opportunities for change and growth, even up to final dress rehearsals. For me, the process has greatly changed the way I view theatrical text: I have a better understanding of the power of personal interpretation, a greater respect for typesetters (after trying to fit a sextetto onto a single page!), and a profound thankfulness for the timeless work of those who have gone before me and for those who share the gift of that work with us today.

Act I

Early morning, an English manor house, 1912. In a room they have received from Lord Almaviva, Figaro and Susanna prepare for their wedding day. When he learns Lord Almaviva is attempting to seduce his bride, Figaro determines to have revenge. Dr. Bartolo and Marcellina arrive at the manor, further complicating the situation by producing a marriage contract Figaro has made with Marcellina to fulfill Figaro's debts. Cherubino has been banished from the manor, and runs to Susanna for help. Before she can help him, Lord Almaviva and Basilio catch Cherubino, but not before Figaro tries to save the day with the help of the townspeople. Lord Almaviva sees through Figaro's scheming and forces the Cherubino to join the army.

Act II

Teatime, Lady Almaviva's bedroom. Rosina, Lord Almaviva's wife, mourns the loss of her husband's love. Encouraged by Figaro and Susanna, Rosina joins in their scheming. To make Lord Almaviva jealous and allow the marriage of Figaro and Susanna, the three decide to send Cherubino, dressed as a Susanna, on a secret rendezvous with Lord Almaviva, and Figaro sends him a note suggesting Rosina is having an affair. As the women dress Cherubino, Lord Almaviva arrives unexpectedly. Cherubino and Susanna hide as the Lord and Lady quarrel. Susanna helps Cherubino escape, and all is well until Antonio arrives, saying Cherubino is still on the estate. Figaro nearly saves the day with the help of Susanna and Rosina, but Dr. Bartolo, Marcellina, and Basilio show Lord Almaviva the marriage contract. Delighted, Lord Almaviva threatens to make Figaro honor the contract with Marcellina.

Act III

Late afternoon. Unshaken by Lord Almaviva's resolve, Susanna and Rosina continue scheming. Susanna promises Lord Almaviva a rendezvous in the garden. He is overjoyed until he overhears Susanna scheming with Figaro, and then he declares revenge. Meanwhile, Cherubino and Barbarina run off to Antonio's house to disguise Cherubino as a girl so that he may stay for the wedding. Rosina mourns her husband's unfaithfulness, but resolves to revive their love. Lord Almaviva attempts revenge through Curzio reviewing Marcellina's case and declaring her contract binding. Figaro disputes, claiming his noble birth prevents it. He explains he is an orphan and, to Lord Almaviva's dismay, Marcellina and Bartolo realize that they are Figaro's parents. The newfound family celebrates, but when Susanna arrives to pay Figaro's debt, she thinks Figaro has betrayed her. Soon she learns the truth. Rosina and Susanna continue their conspiracy against Lord Almaviva by composing a letter confirming the planned

rendezvous. The women of the town and Barbarina honor Rosina with flowers, and Cherubino, dressed as a girl, joins them. Antonio reveals Cherubino, but before Lord Almaviva can punish Cherubino, Barbarina saves him. Figaro and Susanna's wedding takes place, and Susanna gives Lord Almaviva the letter with a pin to return as promise.

Act IV

Night falls, and Barbarina despairs because she cannot find the pin to give back to Susanna from Lord Almaviva. Figaro and Marcellina learn of the rendezvous from Barbarina, and Figaro swears revenge on Susanna. Marcellina speaks out against all men. In the garden, Figaro speaks out against all women. Bartolo and Basilio, at Figaro's request, spy on the lovers and discuss the power of truth. Rosina and Susanna, disguised in each other's cloaks, wait for Lord Almaviva and Figaro to arrive. Susanna declares her love for Figaro, though Figaro thinks she is speaking of Lord Almaviva. Cherubino arrives and tries to seduce who he thinks is Susanna – Rosina in disguise. Lord Almaviva scares Cherubino away, then proceeds to seduce Rosina as well. Figaro jumps out, so Lord Almaviva and Rosina hide. Susanna, disguised as Rosina, tries to trick Figaro, but he recognizes her and tricks her instead. The two reconcile, and then trick Lord Almaviva into thinking Figaro is having an affair with Rosina. In his rage, Lord Almaviva draws a crowd to capture Figaro and the Lady, but the truth is revealed when Rosina comes out of hiding. Lord Almaviva asks Rosina's forgiveness, and the "crazy day" comes to a close.

Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* has not been absent from the repertoire since its premiere. It maintains a significant place in the history of opera for its two innovative characteristics—first, the use of musical means to delineate the individuality of the major roles, and second, the use of the ensemble to move the dramatic action forward in a far more effective way than could be accomplished with extended recitative.

For each of the primary roles Mozart crafted music that would support and reveal the dramatic character differentiated by means of register, rhythmic figures and modes of expression. In general, Lord and Lady Almaviva are represented by more formal music with more expansive melodic lines, which reflects their station in life. Figaro and Susanna are represented by new galant musical style of the classical period made up of short balanced phrases and dance tunes. Although the two pairs are from different stations in life, the two men are both baritones and the two women, sopranos making both couples equal vocally.

Most of the dramatic action happens at the expense of Lord Almaviva. He is psychologically pulled between his social conditioning and his passion. He would like to think of himself as “in control” with his long melodic phrases but he is impetuous and capable of both strong desire and equally virulent anger. His fury is given full vent in the accompanied recitative and aria combination, “You have won the decision,” where his fury is characterized in the orchestra by wide intervals, impulsive dotted rhythms, wild string tremolos and furiously rapid scale passages.



These characteristics appear in the orchestra whenever he has lost control of the situation or when another character reflects on his impetuousness, especially if it affects their own actions. These figures appear in Lady Almaviva's own accompanied recitative when she reflects on her husband's jealous behavior toward her. It even briefly occurs in the Act IV finale when Cherubino, imitating Almaviva, decides on a bit of his own amorous escapade.



But it's the women for whom Mozart reserves his most beautiful music. Lady Almaviva's two matching arias are refined and poised, fitting her station in life, and simultaneously tragic, revealing the distress she feels at her situation. Susanna's Act IV aria, "Beloved, don't be late," is all naturalness and sweetness which we expect from her and the happiness of married life to which she looks forward.

However, even more important than the expressive solo work, is Mozart's use of the ensemble to create a new kind of operatic discourse where characters are able to express individual points of view or personality traits within highly structured music and without disrupting its natural flow.

The opera opens with a duet for Figaro and Susanna. It serves to set the time and place for the action, but even more importantly, the music expresses two separate ideas—a theme made up of two-note figure for Figaro who is measuring the room, and a second theme for Susanna, all made up of running notes so she can show Figaro her wedding veil. Figaro's music eventually gives way to hers and we can see that they will be very happy as long as he gives in.

All the smaller ensembles serve to move the action forward while disclosing new and interesting facets of purpose or misdirection among the singers. The opening duet serves to set the time and place for the opera but, more importantly, the music generates two separate musical ideas—a two-note figure for Figaro who is measuring the room and a tune all made up of running notes for Susanna, who is showing Figaro her wedding veil. Figaro's music eventually gives way to hers, and we can see that they will be very happy—as long as he is able to give in.

The larger ensemble numbers are significant for their structural spans. Chief among them are the finales of Acts II and IV, which serve to entangle and resolve all the events of the evening.

The Act II finale is the longest uninterrupted span of operatic music that Mozart ever wrote—approximately twenty minutes in length. It is made

up of separate numbers that run together, and are meant to be heard as a unit. Mozart steadily builds up the dramatic tension and musical expansion by introducing new keys and meters which correspond to the entrances of new characters until we have arrived at the full dramatic entanglement, which will take the rest of the opera to untangle.

The Act IV finale in the estate gardens builds to another entanglement, but serves to tie up the loose ends of the drama. Its music has a power to make one believe that yes, everyone on stage has come full circle. It is followed by a volcano of a chorus that connects us to the playful atmosphere of the overture and seems to say that this whole cycle of transgression and forgiveness, infidelity and commitment, is finally over and done with.

--Patricia Robertson

The current Broadway hot ticket play *Hamilton*, inspired by Ron Chernow's award winning 2004 biography, depicts one of America's most significant founders in a contemporary hip-hop musical. It is always refreshing to observe and reflect upon a reinterpretation of historic events as well as works of art, and this has been the challenge for Professors Conor Angell, Tracy Manning, and Patricia Robertson in setting Mozart's wildly popular opera *The Marriage of Figaro* in 1912 England. This is a very creative and logical reinterpretation because there are numerous political and social similarities between late eighteenth century Europe and early twentieth century Britain. *Figaro* was first performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1786 at a time when unknowing Europeans were about to experience vast social and political changes from what appeared to be a socially stable Age of Enlightenment to the seismic fallout of the French Revolution (1789-1795) with its principles of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Never again would the privileged royal families, the landed aristocrats, and Church officials be unchallenged. In a similar way, La Belle Epoque period of the late 1800s and early 1900s noted for its presumed social stability gave way to the cataclysmic events of the First World War (1914-1918), the results of which continue to have a direct impact on today's world. European and American societies were dramatically shaken from the horrific loss of life and physical damage of the Great War. We are currently commemorating the events of one hundred years ago when millions of soldiers were slaughtered at Verdun, the Somme, and Chateau-Thierry.

It is no surprise that the five season mini-series "Downton Abbey", the fictional Yorkshire country estate, has become a fascination for millions of viewers who sit riveted in front of their television sets. The interaction between the upstairs aristocratic family of Robert Crawley, the Earl of Grantham and his wife, the Countess, and the downstairs servants during the period from 1912 to the 1920s has a striking parallel in *Figaro* with the relationship between Count Almaviva and his Countess, and the servants featuring Figaro, the head servant and personal valet to the Count, and Susanna, his intended bride and the Countess's maid. Recently a number of books including Lucy Lethbridge's *Servants and The Countess of Carnarvon's Lady Almina* and the *Real Downton Abbey* have been published analyzing the similar structure of early twentieth century British society.

The years 1786 and 1912 were not only at the cusp of vast social and political changes, but also scientific and technological advances.

The fascination for aviation were apparent during both times with experiments in hot air balloons in the 1780s and the first successful heavier-than-air human flight in 1903 by the Wright brothers. In medicine the first successful smallpox vaccine was in 1798 though experiments had occurred before that time, and by the early 1900s Robert Koch was well known for his microbiology research.

Figaro was controversial in 1786 because it revealed the inner life and excessive and outrageous privileges of the nobility. Similarly 1912 was a time when European society with emerging socialist parties and labor unions was grappling with deep-rooted inequalities between the classes and the exclusion of women from political life. Europe was about to change forever as it would in 1789.

--Dr. Alan H. Winquist, Professor, History

**TAYLOR THEATRE AND DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC 2015-2016 SEASON**

Working

February 5-7

Rabbit Hole

February 19-21, 26-28

A Midsummer Night's Dream

April 29-May 1, 6-8

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Evan Koons

From Cincinnati Ohio, Evan Koons is a senior finishing his BM in vocal performance, studying voice under Dr. Patricia Robertson. As a bass-baritone, Evan has been involved with the Taylor Chorale and Sounds for the past four years, as well as Taylor Lyric Theatre. Evan has starred as Freddy Graham in Taylor University's production of *Kiss Me Kate*, Melchior in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and has performed the role of the University's namesake Bishop William Taylor. He would like to thank those who have encouraged, supported, and guided him through his time at Taylor University.



***Jessica Schulte**

Jessica is a junior Theatre Arts major from Anchorage, AK, now living near Nashville, Tennessee. Jessica is a member of Taylor Touring, and appeared last season in *A Piece of My Heart* and *I Love A Piano*, as well as *The Arab Israeli Cookbook* this September. She asst. directed *Tartuffe* last fall, and is Co-Designer for Hair and Makeup this year. She is unspeakably grateful for all of the opportunities for exploration and growth at Taylor and for the unfaltering support of her friends, mentors, and family.



Alexis Turner

Home to Alexis is Goshen, Indiana. She is a sophomore Theatre Arts major with a Music minor. Productions in which she has had roles include *Peter Pan and Wendy*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. To "parents who support me in everything I do...Thank you!"



***Sean Sele**

Sean is a junior Theatre Arts major from Portland, Oregon. While at Taylor he has had roles in *I love a Piano*, *The Arab Israeli Cookbook*, *Tartuffe*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Miracle Worker*, and *Kiss me Kate*. Sean wishes to thank his mom and dad for inspiring and supporting his art.



Katie Vogel

Katie is a senior Creative Writing major with a TESOL minor. Past shows include *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Hillbilly Hankerin'*, *Cinderella* and *Honk*. Special thanks goes to Mr. Cole.

**Erin Davis**

Upland is home to sophomore Vocal Performance major Erin Davis. She plans to become a professor of music following Taylor and grad school. Erin has had roles in *The sound of Music*, *Cinderella*, and *Dido and Aeneas*. Special thanks go to “my wonderful directors.”

**Daniel Morrison**

Daniel is a senior Music Composition major from Ki-jabe, Kenya. He has been involved in the Taylor University productions of *Godspell*, *Though The Earth Give Way*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and *I Love a Piano*. After graduation, he hopes to find a way to use the arts as he follows Jesus. He would like to give special thanks to Dr. Angell for “helping me find my voice, and Tracy for teaching me and others so much about life through theatre.”

***Terrance Volden**

Terrance is the Taylor Theatre Technical Director and has also performed in several Taylor shows including *Godspell* and *Kiss Me, Kate*. Elsewhere, he has appeared as Man in Chair in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* and Horace Vandergelder in *Hello Dolly*, among others.

***Zachary Cook**

Zachary is a senior History major from Whitinsville, Massachusetts. Throughout his time at Taylor, Zach has immersed himself in the study of world history and politics. After Taylor he hopes to go to law school. Zach has acted in previous Taylor shows including *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Tartuffe* and *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*. He is also a member of the Traveling Touring Company.

**Abby Palmisano**

Abby is a junior Music Education major from Wheaton, Illinois. She plans to be an elementary school music teacher. Abby is a member of Chorale and has had roles in *The Chairs*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *A Servant of Two Masters*, *Kiss Me, Kate* and *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*.



***Carter Perry**

Carter is a Theatre major from La Porte, Indiana. His show credits include *The Arab Israeli Cookbook*, *I Love a Piano*, *Talley's Folly*, *A Piece of My Heart*, *Tartuffe*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Cherry Orchard*, *A Servant of Two Masters*, *Kiss Me*, *Kate*, *Getting Away With Murder*, and *Godspell*. Carter would like to thank his friends and family for having such a powerful impact on his life. God is great!



Megan McKechnie

Megan is a junior social work major. She has worked as the Charge Scenic Artist for Taylor Theatre for the past two years, and is excited to be in her first main stage show. Her parents are super cool people and she is incredibly thankful for their support, as well as the support from the rest of her family and her friends. She would like to extend special thanks to her brother for fueling her creativity as a young child and to her boyfriend who always washes out her paintbrushes for her.



***Grace Bolinger**

Hudson, Ohio, is home to Junior, Secondary English Education major and Theatre Arts minor, Grace Bolinger. She has appeared in Taylor's productions of *The Servant of Two Masters* and *Kiss Me, Kate!* She is the conductor and an actor in the Taylor Touring Company. Since her freshman year, Grace has participated in almost every Taylor Theatre production in some capacity. She is excited to be on stage again, and you can see her in the Lyric Theatre's production of *Working* this February. She would like to thank her family, friends, Tracy, Terrance, and Savior for getting her to where she is today. John 15:5



Paige Kennedy

Paige is a freshman Music Education major with a minor in Theatre. Bolingbrook, IL is the place she calls home. Her passion for choir and choral music has led to her plans to be a choral director at the high school or collegiate level one day. This is Paige's first production here at Taylor. Before college she has performed in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, among others. She would love to give a big thank you to her parents who have supported, loved, and encouraged her since day one.



Lauren Vock

Lauren is a freshman Church Music Ministries major from North Prairie, Wisconsin. She is a member of the Taylor Chorale and Sounds ensembles and will appear in *Working* this February. Her high school credits include *Beauty and the Beast*, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *Tarzan: The Stage Musical*, *Rumors*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Lauren expresses gratitude to the Lord, her family and friends, and her directors for the opportunity to perform in her first Taylor production.



Ty Kinter

Scottdale, Pennsylvania is home to Ty. He is a sophomore Vocal Performance major and Theatre Arts minor who plans to perform following his time at Taylor. Last year he performed in the Opera Scenes and *I Love A Piano*. Ty also performed in Monty Python's *Spamalot* at a local theatre near his home. Earlier this fall he had a role in *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*. He would like to thank Dr. Angell for introducing him to the world of theatre.



Josh Duch

Senior Music Education major Josh Duch is from Wheaton, Illinois. He plans to move to Tennessee and teach music at either the middle or high school level. Josh has performed the roles of Kaspar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Hortensio in *Kiss Me, Kate!*, and Rudolph in *Hello, Dolly!*. He wishes to thank Dr. Angell, Dr. Robertson and all his friends and family.



Bradley Jensen

Bradley is a Freshman Theatre Arts major from Alexandria, Indiana. He hopes to become a stage actor and singer after graduation. God has blessed him with several incredible roles both at his high school and The Commons Theatre in Alexandria, including Danny Zuko (*Grease*), Judas (*Godspell*), Charlie Brown (*You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*), as well as co-directing youth productions of *The Little Mermaid Jr* and *Aristocats Kids*.



Hyung Jin Park

Home for Hyung Jin Park is Tokyo, Japan. He is a junior Philosophy major and plans to be a Medical Ethicist following graduation. Hyung Jin has appeared in *Dido and Aeneas*, *The King and I*, among other musicals. He wishes to thank his music professors here at Taylor.



Grace Foltz

Grace is a sophomore Theatre Arts major from Charlotte, North Carolina. Grace has had roles in *Young Frankenstein*, *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*, *'Night Mother*, *Curtains*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Singin' in the Rain*. Special thanks to "my family and their unwavering support of me that leads them to travel 10 hours in order to see me in these shows, Tracy Manning for believing in me when I don't feel like I believe in myself, and to Rebecca Rodden for her guidance in my theatrical endeavors and for our friendship."

**Nate Aeilts**

Bloomfield, Iowa is home to Nate. He is a senior Computer Science major. He is a cast member in the Taylor Touring Company. Nate wishes to thank his Touring Company friends.

**Charnell Peters**

Charnell is a senior professional writing major from Kokomo, Indiana. She has spent four years with the Taylor Touring Company, and she wants to extend special thanks to the cast and crew for making this show a fantastic experience.

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PRODUCTION STAFF

Artistic Director.....***Tracy Manning**

Music Director.....**Conor Angell**

Scenic & Lighting Designer.....**Kevin Gawley**

Music Consultant.....**Patricia Robertson**

Choreographer.....**Kory Browder**

Technical Director.....***Terrance Volden**

Costume Designer.....***Sara Bailey**

Stage Manager.....***Leah Murphy**

Assistant Stage Managers**Kenzi Nevins**
Suzie Quinn

Assistant to the Director.....**Alexis Colón**

Master Carpenter.....**Erin Gautille**

Charge Scenic Artist.....**Megan McKechnie**
***Grace Bolinger**

Revolve Operator.....**Emma Wagoner**

Master Electrician.....**Rachael Kayes**
Hope Bolinger
Anna Kaye Schulte
Zachary Levine
Ellen Adle

Spot Operators.....Elizabeth Steckenrider
 Ellie Vandegriff Rae Beasley
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Poster Design & Video Publicity.....***Andrew Davis**

Box Office Assistant.....**Evan Koons**
 Jayne Reinhiller *Morgan Turner
 Jenna VanWeelden Nathan Pavey

Head Usher.....**Chin Ai Oh**
 Andrea Sanders Michaela Shake Tori Newman Lauryn Chan
 Abigail Lingenhoel Danielle Riehl Gwen Agness Matthew Parks
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***Denotes Alpha Psi Omega Membership, National Theatre Honor Society**