





Welcome to the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus in their very first staged production of a children's opera. We are especially pleased to present the Michigan premier of *The Maker of Illusions* by nationally known children's opera composer Seymour Barab.

This is the inaugural season for the children's chorus and we are especially grateful to the Mandell L. & Madeleine H. Berman Foundation for their generous grant which made it possible to establish a permanent children's chorus. The chorus will not only participate in main stage productions but will give concerts of their own as well as a fully staged opera each season.

The Children's Chorus is supported by an enthusiastic group of parents who volunteer their time with such diverse activities as publicity, marketing, fundraising, recruitment, curriculum, and "Parent on Duty".

This combination of talented children and enthusiastic support, under the artistic leadership of Suzanne Mallare Acton, promises to provide the community with another exciting educational and performance dimension.

David DiChiera

### The Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus

Presents

# The Maker of Illusions

By Seymour Barab May 19, 2008 7:30 PM Conductor: Dianna Hochella Director: Alaina Brown Set Design: Monika Essen

Costume Design: Suzanne M. Hanna

Lighting Design: Andrew Griffin

Hair/Makeup Design: Elizabeth Geck

Stage Manager: Matt Jackson

Pianist: Joseph Jackson

#### Synopsis For transgressions against her people, a

### In order of vocal appearance Genie......Veronica Battersby, Madeline Thibault\* Queen....Maggie Malaney, Ayla Stackhouse\* Girl......Molly Rooney, Lauren Ellsworth\* Boy......Chad Schultze, Patrick Takata\* Old Woman... Amanda Walker, Jessica Tifft\* \* Understudy

THE CAST

#### Goblins/Townspeople

Elena Bakaluca Sara Barron Ann Marie Calvaneso Mary Grace Calvaneso Dylan Desai Lauren Ellsworth Jack Fordon Greta Ginter Natalie Gratsch Caroline Hofman Nicole Huot Brittany Johnson Jade Kitchen Akaash Kolluri Kaylynn Lear Sherene Levert

Kayla Marie Lumpkin Alaina Matthews Kelly McGraw Michelle Proschek Connor Reinman Emily Helman Scherrer Jared Helman Scherrer Ayla Stackhouse Patrick Takata Dominique Taylor June Teifer Madeline Thibault Roosevelt Tidwell Jessica Tifft

-Running Time-Approximately 1 hour without intermission

wicked Queen has been imprisoned on a lonely mountain top, where she is being guarded by a Genie and his Goblins. The Queen, horrified to discover that she is losing her beauty, believes it is due to the hostile climate, but the Genie explains that she has squandered her Life Force on evil deeds. The Queen demands that the Genie bring her a mortal whose Life Force will be sacrificed to restore her beauty. The Genie works an illusion on a Boy of the valley below, causing him to run away from his home and go up the mountain, where he feels a happy fate awaits him. The Boy's sister, fearing he will freeze or starve, goes in pursuit of him. The Genie, by creating illusions and with the help of the Goblins, tries to stop her, but her determination overcomes his efforts, and she rescues the Boy in the nick of time. In the end, the Snow Queen learns that the beauty of a person lies in their

affection and compassion.

# Artist

# Seymour Barab

# Composer

Seymour Barab has been bringing delight to audiences of all ages throughout his long career. Born in Chicago, Illinois in 1921, he has composed instrumental works and some of the most beloved and frequently performed operas for children. According to Central Opera Service, he was the most performed composer of opera in America during the 1988-89 season. He has been called "the Rossini of our time" and "one of the great masters of late twentieth century comic operas". Because of his prolific contribution to opera, Mr. Barab was presented the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Opera Association in 1988. Mr. Barab resides in New York City with his wife Marge and continues to work as an active composer.

# Veronica Battersby

# Genie

Veronica is a 14 year-old eighth grader at Our Lady of Sorrows in Farmington Hills. She is the President of the Student Council and a member of the National Junior Honor Society. Veronica appeared as Little Cosette in Les Miserables and Chip in Beauty and the Beast at Walled Lake Central, as Molly in Annie Jr. and Ida the Mother Duck in Honk, Jr. at Our Lady of Sorrows, as Sara Crewe in A Little Princess and Louisa in The Sound of Music, and most recently appeared in The Music Man at Mercy High School. Veronica performed in Michigan Opera Theatre's 2007 production of *Turandot*.

# Alaina Brown

### Director

Director Alaina Brown made her stage directing debut in The Wiz in 2006 for the Performing Vocal Arts Center in Santa Barbara California. She has been Assistant Director for the Michigan Opera Theatre's Learning at the Opera House Opera Workshop for ten consecutive summers. In addition to her directorial credits, Ms. Brown also performs as a soprano and has been praised for her fine musicianship and exquisite coloratura. The Cincinnati Post named her as, "The Young Artist to watch", following her debut with the Cincinnati Opera as Frasquita in Carmen. Ms. Brown made her European debut as Mary Stone in Douglas Moore's The Devil and Daniel Webster in Palermo, Italy. For Michigan Opera Theatre, Ms. Brown has performed the roles of Inez in Il Trovatore, Lily and The Strawberry Woman in Porgy and Bess, and Marianne in Der Rosenkavalier. With the Great Lakes Lyric Opera, Ms. Brown sang the role of Aurora in the premier of William Grant Stills opera A Bayou Legend and the

role of Adina in *The Elixir of Love* as well as Roselinda in *Die Fledermaus*.

#### Lauren Ellsworth

#### Girl Understudy

Lauren Ellsworth is a seventh grader at West Middle School who loves music, art, ice-skating and animals. She first appeared with Michigan Opera Theatre in last year's *Turandot*. She has performed in many musicals, including *Honk! Jr*. and *Oliver*, and she recently appeared at the Fisher Theater in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Whistle Down the Wind*. Lauren dedicates her performance to the memory of her cousin, Olivia Grace Harmer.

#### Monika Essen

Scenic and Sound Designer

Monika is an award winning, nationally recognized artist and designer who was recently the recipient of the Detroit Free Press Lawrence De Vine Award for Outstanding Contribution to Theatre. She has designed sets, costumes, and props for countless productions in theatre, commercials, opera, and film. Additionally, she creates interiors and full sensory, multi-media environments for residential and commercial clients, including most notably the Detroit Zoo. She also designs and creates furniture with her husband Kurt Kastner, and they are currently constructing their

new studio/home/gallery/ performance space on Mack Ave. in Detroit. You can see more of Monika's design work at www.studioepoque.com.

#### **Elizabeth Geck**

Wig and Make-Up Designer

Elizabeth has been coordinating the Michigan Opera Theatre wig and make-up crew for the last five years, as well as assisting the Wig and Make-up designer by applying wigs and make-up for main stage opera productions. Ms. Geck has assisted with several new productions including Aida, Margaret Garner and Pearl Fishers, as well as this year's productions of Cyrano, Marriage of Figaro, La Sonnambula, and La Rondine. Elizabeth designed wigs and make-up for Grosse Pointe Theater's production of West Side Story. In May of 2004, she volunteered her make-up services for Wayne State University's Fashion Department's final runway show. In the fall of 2005, she applied make-up for Neiman Marcus' runway show. Elizabeth's experience working with children goes all the way back to her days of coaching soccer, basketball and tee-ball for Joe Dumars' Fieldhouse and the AYSO.

#### Andrew Griffin

### Lighting Design

Andrew F. Griffin is a freelance lighting designer based in Washington, DC. For Michigan Opera Theatre, he has worked as an assistant lighting designer for the past eight productions, including the world premier of Cyrano. He also recently designed Il Trovatore for Toledo Opera. In the Washington DC area, Andrew designs for companies including Olney Theatre Center, Woolly Mammoth, Washington Shakespeare Company, and Adventure Theatre, where he is also a resident artist.

#### Suzanne M. Hanna

#### Costume Designer

Suzanne Hanna is the Costume Director for Michigan Opera Theatre. She assisted John Pascoe with the costume design for Dr. David DiChiera's Cvrano. In addition, she has served as costume designer for Michigan Opera Theatre (Madame Cadillac), The New Studio Theatre (Angels In America, Millennium Approaches, Master Class), Performance Network (Doubt, Candida, Boston Marriage, Kimberly Akimbo, I Am My Own Wife), the Jewish Ensemble Theatre (Fiddler on the Roof, Brooklyn Boy), The Hillberry Theatre (The Philadelphia Story), The Motor City Lyric Opera (Amahl and the Night Visitors), Oakland University ( Three Sisters, Othello, Translations) and others.

She has won an Oakland Press Theatre Award for her design work on *Angels in America, Millennium Approaches* and received recognition from the A.C.T.F. national committee for her costume design of *Othello* for Oakland University.

### **Dianna Hochella**

#### Conductor

Dianna Hochella is the Assistant Director and Conductor of Michigan Opera Theatre's Children Chorus. She is presently Director of Music at Littlefield Presbyterian Church in Dearborn, Michigan. Ms. Hochella serves as a vocal instructor for Shrine Catholic High School in Royal Oak and has a private voice studio in Ann Arbor. As a member of the Michigan Opera Theatre Chorus, Ms. Hochella has performed on the MOT main stage productions in the world premiere of Cyrano and Margaret Garner. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in music education from Radford University in Virginia and a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from the University of Michigan. Her passion is teaching and sharing her love of opera and great singing with young singers.

### **Joseph Jackson**

# Pianist

Joseph Jackson currently serves as the Organist/Music Associate of the First Presbyterian Church of

Royal Oak. Prior to this position he held positions as Music Director at a number of historical churches such as The First Presbyterian Church of Detroit and a long tenure at The First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. A frequent recitalist and accompanist throughout the country, his broadcast credits include National Public Radios' "The First Art" and "Pipedreams". His solo recording "Philadelphia Gothic" appears on the label DTR and his performance of the Howard Hanson Organ Concerto is available on the Naxos label.

#### **Maggie Malaney**

#### Queen

Maggie is currently a seventh grader in Farmington Hills. Her theatrical credits include performing in several productions at Michigan Opera Theatre productions including Dead Man Walking, La Boheme, and Turandot. Last year she appeared as Susan Waverly in White Christmas at the Fox Theatre. She has also performed locally with Sky's the Limit Productions, Daydream Productions and Lake Superior Youth Theatre. She recently recorded background vocals for a Children's video series called Noodlebug.

# Molly Rooney

# Girl

Molly is an eighth grader at Upland Hills. She most recently appeared as Miss Hannigan in Annie. Molly has starred in the role of Ugly in Honk!, Jr. and Jura in Star Garden. She's been involved in the cast of The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion The Witch and the Wardrobe, Brigadoon, James and the Giant Peach, Midsummer Night's Dream, and Secret Garden. She has participated in and won her division in a singing competition through Access Broadway, and sang locally in the Lake Orion Christmas Parade, and Michigan State Fair. She also sings in the recitals through the Sweetapple Music School.

# **Chad Schultze**

#### Boy

Currently a 6th grader at Grosse Ile Middle School, Chad started performing in community theatre productions when he was five years old. He is making both his operatic and Michigan Opera Theatre debut at age 12. As a young performer, he looks forward to future operatic performances.

# **Patrick Takata**

#### Boy Understudy

Patrick is a fifth grader who is an avid fan of the opera. His love for music began when he started piano lessons five years ago. He performed in the children's chorus in Michigan Opera Theatre's 2007 production of *Turandot* and enjoys participating in the summer opera performance camps. He likes to read, watch the history channel, and play with his younger brother.

# **Madeline Thibault**

# Genie Understudy

Madeline Thibault is currently an eighth grader at St. Paul Catholic School in Grosse Pointe and will attend Regina High School in the fall. She has appeared in several plays with the Grosse Pointe Youth Theatre. Madeline first appeared in Michigan Opera Theatre's 2007 production of *Turandot*. Last summer Madeline was Edith in the Opera House Operetta camp production of *Pirates of Penzance*. Madeline also sang in *Carmina Burana* with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at Meadowbrook.

#### **Jessica** Tifft

## Old Woman Understudy

Jessica Tifft is 13 years old and first performed in the children's chorus in Michigan Opera Theatre's 2007 production of *Turandot*. She currently studies voice at Oakland University Music Preparatory under the direction of Ms. Elizabeth Medvinsky and has sung on numerous occasions at Varner Hall. Jessica has performed in Meadowbrook Theatre productions of *A Christmas Carol* with her most recent role being Martha Cratchit. As a dancer she has performed the roles of Mouse, Gumdrop, Gingersnap, and Party Girl in *The Nutcracker*. Jessica has been invited to attend the Women in Technology Program at Lake Superior State University this summer.

#### Amanda Walker

#### Old Woman

Amanda is a 13 year old, eighth grade student at West Middle School in Rochester Hills where she has been an active member of the school choir. Amanda participated in the state Solo and Ensemble competition where she earned a superior rating. She has sung the National Anthem at various city and school events. Amanda was recently accepted into the advanced choir at Rochester High School for the upcoming school year. She plans on attending Interlochen this summer to continue her goals in the operetta/classical field of music.

# **Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus Contributors**

# The Presenting Sponsor

# MOTCC gratefully acknowledges a generous grant from the Mandell L. and Madeleine H. Berman Foundation which provided the start-up funding for the program.

The Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus extends appreciation to these generous donors whose contributions will play an integral part in the Children's Chorus ongoing success.

Ms. Mary Lynn Austin

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We are gratefully accepting donations for MOTCC. If you would like to contribute to the Chorus, please make checks payable to Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus. For more information, contact Megan Landry at mlandry@motopera .org or 313-237-3261.

We apologize to any contributors whose donations were received after we went to print.



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# *We Support The Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus*

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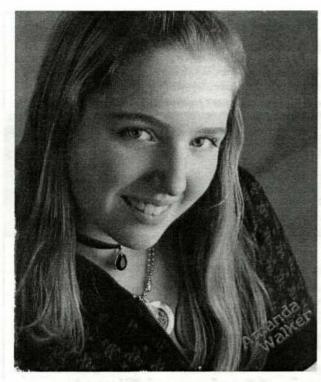
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# Amanda (Va-Voom)

Remembering the day of your audition for M.O.T.C.C., you said to me, "This is my home!"

We are so proud of you, our Angel of Music!

Love, Mom, Dad, Bryan, and Especially Kiara

Jessica Tifft,

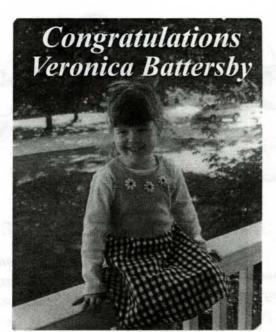
We are very proud of your accomplishments in the MOTCC this year!!

Sing On!!!!

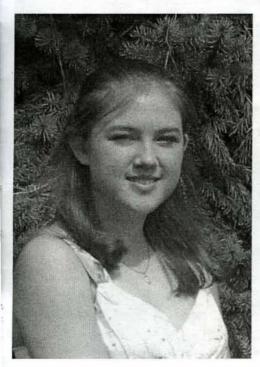
Love, Mom & Gabrielle



Keep up the good work Peanut!! :-) Love, Grandma & Grandpa



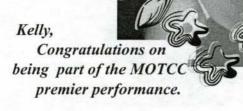
We Love the "Magic" of Your Music! Mom, Dad, Helen, Brian and Patty



KayLynn Lear

We're all so proud of you! Break a glass!!

Love, Grampa Larry, Grandma Sharon, Pappy, Grandma Carol Mom, Dad & Korey



We love you, Mom, Dad, Lauren, Cullin & Grandma



To Our "Queenie"



We look into the mirror and what do we see?

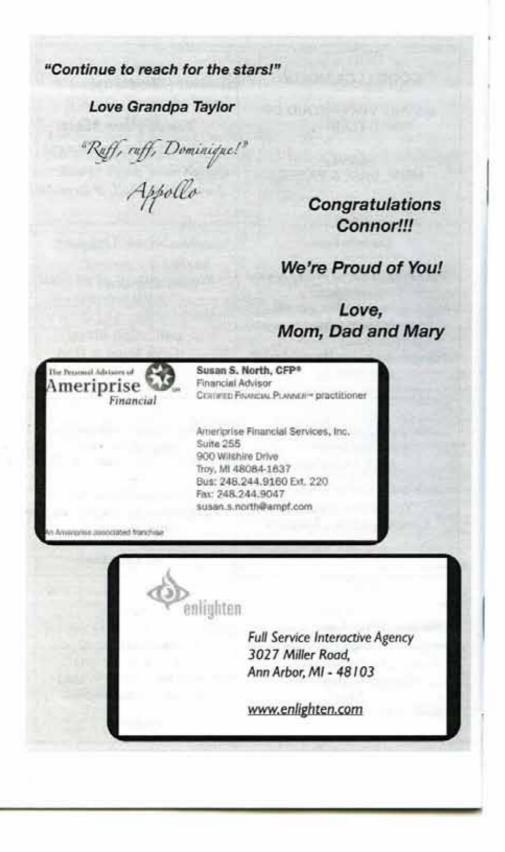
Beautiful Maggie Malaney!

We Love you, Your Family



| Lauren,<br>Whether you're in Turandot,<br>Whistle Down the Wind,<br>Honk!,<br>Let Freedom Ring, or Charlie,<br>you'll always be our Broadway<br>Baby! Love, your Family! | Wonderful<br>Performance<br>MOTCC Staff<br>Thank You for Everything!   |
|--|--|
| Congratulations Dominique<br>Taylor, my Lil' sis!<br>Love Jonathan<br>Wonderful, like you always are!!<br>Grand-daddy Littlejohn   | Michelle<br>You are our shining star.<br>Continue to shine.<br>We are very proud of all your<br>accomplishments!<br>Love You<br>Mom, Dad, Adam and Scott.    |
| Congratulations, Nicole!<br>We are so incredibly proud of<br>you!<br>Love, Mom & Dad   | Tremendous work Dominique!<br>Teha<br>Keep up the success in singing<br>You're great! says Khalil  |
| To the Boy:<br>We are so proud of you. Always<br>be the best you can be.<br>Lots of Love: The Chauffer,<br>The Maid, & Your Sister<br>TYMDLY4E                           | Greta,<br>Congratulations on a great,<br>sbow! You have had a<br>wonderful year, and we are<br>very proud of you!<br>Love, Mom, Dad,<br>Geoffrey & Alexander |

| GOOD LUCK MOLLY!  | Brittany,   |
|---|---|
| WE ARE VERY PROUD OF<br>YOU!  | You are our Most.<br>Note-Worthy Singer!                                  |
| MOM, DAD, & PATRICK   | Love Mom, Dad, & Brendan.   |
| Dominique   | Madeline Thibault   |
| Excellent! I am so proud of you!<br>Love Mom.                           | We are proud of all your<br>hard work!                                    |
| Renee & Daniel want to say:   | We love you and wish you<br>well. Gob Bless.                              |
| "Congratulations Dominique!"  | Love Mom & Dad  |
| "Great Job Dominique, just like<br>your big brother!"<br>Love Ya Joshua | "Hey, Nique, continue your<br>singing success!"<br>Says Dad               |
| "You're the greatest!"<br>Love Grandma Littlejohn                       | Grandma Taylor Says:<br>"I am thanking God for you, you<br>are so sweet!" |
|   | We Love You   |
| Alaina,   | Natalie   |
| We are excited and proud to see you on stage for your first.            | We're so proud of you.  |
| opera!<br>Sing your heart out!  | Congratulations!  |
| Love,<br>Mom, Dad, Nicole & Christian.                                  | Love, Mom & Dad   |









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# *The Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus*

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# Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus

The Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus (MOTCC), led by Michigan Opera Theatre Chorus Master Suzanne Mallare Acton, is a permanent children's ensemble for Metro Detroit youth interested in vocal musical theatrical art. Accepting children ages 10-16 with unchanged voices by audition, the choir performs as a seperate ensemble, as well as with international opera stars in MOT productions. The chorus was founded in the spring of 2007 with a generous grant from the Mandell L. and Madeleine H. Berman Foundation. The mission of the MOTCC is to provide exceptional choral music and theatrical performance instruction to young people in a professional environment.

# Michigan Opera Theatre

David DiChiera - General Director Karen VanderKloot DiChiera - Director of Community Programs

# **Children's Chorus Staff**

Suzanne Mallare Acton - Director Dianna Hochella - Assistant Director, Conductor Megan Landry - Chorus Administrator Joseph Jackson - Pianist

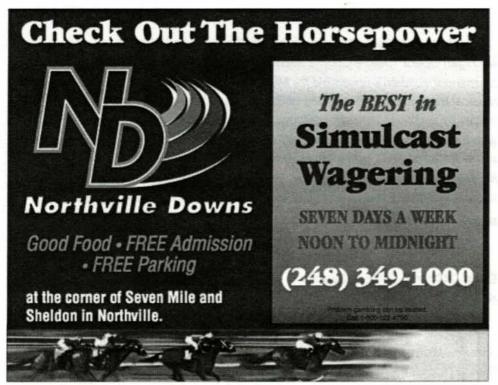
# **Committiee Chairs**

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# MOTCC Audition Call

Audition call for the 2008-2009 season for children ages 10-16 with unchanged voices. Applicants must bring a prepared song, and if possible, a copy of the music. An accompanist will be provided. Children will also be asked to read a poem of their choice. Sign up for an audition on May 29, 30, or 31 at: <u>www.motopera.org</u>

For more information about the MOTCC, contact the program administrator, Megan Landry, at mlandry@ motopera.org, or 313-237-3261







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# The Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus would like to thank...

Our volunteers in the Wig and Makeup Crew from the Paul Mitchell School in Sterling Heights, Michigan

> Emily Cifka Brittany Crinson Dan Dewilde Dani Dewilde Carly Emeigh Autumn Henry Vetta Kajoshaj Denise Llombart Kristin Martin

Jean Schneider, Keyboard

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Visit our new website at

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