THE STONEWALL OPERAS

SEPTEMBER 12, 2019 | 6:30 P.M.

Presented by The American Opera Project and the NYU Tisch School of the Arts
In the early hours of June 28, 1969, in another bar somewhere else in the Village, a young man struggles with a pair of intertwined decisions: how to live as his authentic self and whether or not to go outside and join a revolution that has been drawing ever closer.
It’s 400 years in the future, and humanity has rebuilt itself after an apocalyptic event that sent the survivors into another dark age. The only artifact they have from the previous civilization is a book on the history of the Stonewall Uprising. This madcap dystopian comedy asks, “What happens when a society is built on the story of Stonewall, and what happens when someone wants to deviate from the norms?”

On June 28, 1969, a jazz quartet finishes a gig at the Village Vanguard and embarks on an odyssey around the corner to arrive at the Stonewall Inn. In a sonic landscape awash with Lynchian blue notes and surreal motives, four musicians strive for self-acceptance among the dissonance.
THE POMADA INN
Brian Cavanagh-Strong, composer
Ben Bonnema, librettist
Kelly Horsted, music director

Holly: Amy Justman
Tara: Kathryn Krasovec
Alek: Errin Duane Brooks
Igor: Christopher Carbin

In Kiev, Igor wants to go to the bathhouse, but Alek fears a police raid; in New York, Holly and Tara don’t have to worry about such things. The Pomada Inn throws these modern-day couples together across time and space to explore the global legacy of Stonewall and the work that still needs to be done.
ABOUT THE CREATORS

**BRYAN BLASKIE**’s music was most recently heard Off-Broadway in *Assistants the Musical*, co-written with Apex Legends and Titanfall 2’s Manny Hagopian. His musical *Nothing to See Here* (with Laurie Hochman) was a semi-finalist for the National Musical Theatre Conference, and his opera *Outside* (with Seth Christenfeld) was presented at the Stonewall Inn in collaboration with American Opera Projects. Music direction credits include *Charlotte’s Web* (TheatreWorks USA), *Alien vs. Musical, Boy From Oz* (LA Drama Critics Circle Award, Stage Raw Award, Ovation Award nomination), *110 in the Shade* (Ovation Award for Best Musical), *Tonya Harding: The Musical*, and *Daisy and Jordan’s Sunday Brunch of Shame* featuring Jordan Kai Burnett and Tony Award winner Daisy Eagan. Blaskie is a graduate of Denison University and NYU Tisch’s Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program.

**BEN BONNEMA** is a Jonathan Larson Award-winning composer-lyricist. *The New Yorker* recently raved about his show *The Apple Boys*, calling it “a bushelful of delights” with “clever, catchy songs” (HERE Arts Center, book by Jonothon Lyons). Ben wrote the book, music and lyrics for Adult Swim’s *Peter Panic*, a musical video game that’s been played by nearly two million people (developed by James Marion). His slumber party musical *Boys Who Tricked Me* was called “heart-healing musical theater” by Joshua Barone of *The New York Times*, and had a three-week showcase production at the Musical Theatre Factory. Bonnema’s other full-length works include *One Way* with Christopher Staskel (Goodspeed Writers Colony, 2018 NAMT Finalist); *The Lost Girl* with Arianna Rose; and *Sleep No More* (additional sound design and composition). He also worked on the film *Mary Poppins Returns* as music associate to Marc Shaiman (Oscar nominee for best score). Bonnema holds an M.F.A. from NYU’s Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program.

**BRIAN CAVANAGH-STRONG** writes music and works on projects that use music to tell stories. His work has found a place in theater, musical theater, opera, film and television, and has been performed in New York City, regionally and internationally. Cavanagh-Strong has written music for *All Long True American Stories*, a five-play cycle in which collaborator Julia May Jonas reimagines canonical American male-experience plays (such as Arthur Miller’s *All My Sons* and Eugene O’Neill’s *A Long Day’s Journey into Night*) for other people — mostly women. He is the music director and music supervisor of *Anthem*, a new podcast musical by John Cameron Mitchell and Bryan Weller, now available on Luminary. Cavanagh-Strong is a proud graduate of Grinnell College and holds an M.F.A. from the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. He’s a member of ASCAP and subscribes to *Cook’s Illustrated*. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.
SETH CHRISTENFELD is a lyricist, librettist and dramaturg. His musical theater work includes *The Oxford Epidemic*, *A Door* and *Awake* (all with music by James Ballard); *Wait Forever* (music by Sean Havrilla); and *The Bad Ideas of Jack Andrews* (music by Joseph Trefler; 2014 Davenport 10-Minute Play Festival finalist; NAAP Discover series). His work in opera includes *Outside* (music by Bryan Blaskie), *An Unbroken Line* (music by Spencer Robelen) and *Women’s Work* (music by Benji Goldsmith; Salzman Award finalist). Christenfeld holds an M.F.A in musical theater writing from NYU and a B.A in drama studies from SUNY Purchase. He is a member of ASCAP, the Dramatists Guild and the They Might Be Giants fan club. Raised in Westchester County, Christenfeld now lives in Manhattan, where he spends his days as the literary manager at the York Theatre Company. He tweets frequently (@earbox) and Instagrams occasionally (@sethdoesthings) but hasn’t updated his website since 2016.

KEVIN CUMMINES is a composer, educator, organist/pianist and singer, with a diverse output including electronic music, theatrical and film scores, and commercial and experimental genres for choral and instrumental platforms. Cummines is organist and music director for Grace United Methodist Church (Wyckoff, NJ), former conductor of the Cali School New Music Ensemble (2014–2016) and assistant director of Con Vivo Music in Jersey City, and he accepts freelance accompaniment work when time allows. Cummines is a graduate of Indiana University Jacobs School of Music (B.M. music composition, B.S.O.F. voice and ethnomusicology), Rutgers University-Camden (M.A. liberal studies), New York University’s Tisch School for the Arts (M.F.A. musical theatre writing) and Montclair State University Cali School of Music (M.A. music composition). He is currently focusing on the development of several new operas and musical theater pieces, as well as on developing repertoire for underserved solo instruments and small ensembles. He is always seeking new performers to collaborate in the development of new works across media platforms and artistic skill sets.

SHOSHANA GREENBERG is a lyricist, librettist, singer and theater journalist. She has worked on the musicals *Days of Rage* with Hyeyoung Kim and *Lightning Man* with Jeffrey Dennis Smith. Her work in opera includes *The Community* with Kevin Cummines and *Margaret* with Paulo Tirol, both as part of the Opera Lab with NYU’s Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program and American Opera Projects. Her songs have been heard at various venues, from Lincoln Center to the Duplex, where she recently performed her one-woman cabaret show *Not Coming Back*. She has written for *American Theatre*, *The Interval* and *Women and Hollywood* and serves as a contributing editor for the musical theater publication *Musical Theater Today*. She also created and hosts the musical theater podcast *Scene to Song* and coordinates social media and member e-mails for the Thornton Wilder Society. She holds an M.F.A. from the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program at NYU and a B.A. from Barnard College.
DEEPALI GUPTA is a writer and performer. Her work explores themes of mania and insanity, and their relationship to femininity. She makes work in an attempt to unravel the warped weave of narratives surrounding disorder and neurodivergence. Her music has been heard at venues such as The Public Theater, Joe’s Pub, Ars Nova, Lincoln Center Theater, The Bushwick Starr, and Judson Memorial Church. She is a Makers Lab resident with Ars Nova and Affiliated Artist with The Civilians and Target Margin Theater; as well as a member of the New Georges Jam. B.A. Brown (Weston Award for Playwriting); M.F.A. Tisch.

TYLER J. RUBIN is a New York City- and New Jersey-based composer, woodwind doubler and music educator. His music lives at the intersection of opera and musical theater. Rubin’s operas include Ten Minutes in the Life or Death of... and I Celebrate (libretti by Marella Martin Koch); Back to the Shore, A Jersey Short Opera (libretto by Mika Kauffman); and most recently, Nightlife (libretto by Deepali Gupta). His musical theater works include How to Create a Young Girl (book and lyrics by Laura Barati) and Writers Blocked! (book and lyrics by Josh Shapiro). His compositions have been performed in New York City at St. Luke’s Theatre, NYU, Don’t Tell Mama, the PIT Loft, the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning and the Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural Center. His writing has also been performed at Muhlenberg College and Montclair State University. He obtained his M.F.A. at NYU Tisch’s Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program and his B.M. in music theory/composition from Montclair State University.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Tenor **ERRIN DUANE BROOKS** most recently sang Canio in *Pagliacci* with Boheme Opera New Jersey and covered Dick Johnson in New York City Opera’s *Fanciulla del West*. He has performed with many companies throughout the world, including South Shore Opera, Toledo Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro Petruzzelli and the Torino Opera. Brooks won the 2017 George London-Kirsten Flagstad Award, was Grand Prize winner in the 2016 Bel Canto Competition, and was a national semifinalist in the 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Upcoming performances include Robbins in *Porgy and Bess* with the Torino Opera. Brooks received a B.M. from Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan, and an M.M. from Bowling Green State University. He also earned both a B.M. and M.M. from Eastman School of Music, where he was a fellowship recipient and first-place winner in the Kneisel Lieder Competition. He has taught at Hunter College, Mannes College of Music, the International Workshops in Graz, Austria, Bowdoin International Music Festival, Hartt School of Music and Five Towns College.

**CHRISTOPHER CARBIN** is a Los Angeles-based bass-baritone praised by *Opera News* for his “velvety purr,” and by *Opera Today* for his “sheen and amplitude.” Carbin has been a young artist with The Glimmerglass Festival for two seasons, an apprentice artist with Palm Beach Opera, a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and a studio artist at the Crested Butte Opera Studio. He is a frequent performer of new American works, having recently created the role of Marsyas in *PermaDeath*, a White Snake Projects production, and workshopped the one-act opera *Pepito* by Nicholas Benavides at The Glimmerglass Festival. Carbin holds an M.M. from the New England Conservatory of Music and a B.M. from the UMKC Conservatory of Music.

Praised by *Opera News* for her “unusually rich and resonant” voice, contralto **SARA COUDEN** has already established herself as a premier interpreter of operatic, chamber and song repertoire. Highlights of her 2019–2020 season include the role of Irene in *Theodora* at the Staunton Music Festival; Testo in Stradella’s *La Susanna* with Heartbeat Opera and Opera Lafayette; Israelitish Man in *Judas Maccabaeus* with Philharmonia Baroque; Shostakovich’s *From Jewish Folk Poetry* with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* with True Concord Voices; soloist in Kristin Haraldsdóttir’s *Blóðhófnir* with the MATA Festival; and songs from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* at Marlboro Music Festival. Couden is a graduate of the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.
American baritone **MATTHEW GAMBLE** has established himself as an artist of rare versatility, while his young career continues to grow with theaters in both North America and Europe. Recent and future engagements include debuts with Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, Lincoln Center Theater, PROTOTYPE Festival, Heartbeat Opera, Lthe Castleton Festival and the Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice. Gamble has just completed an extended collaboration as principal soloist with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company in the development of two new works — *Analogy/Lance* and *A Letter to My Nephew* — which has led to performances throughout North America, Europe and Asia. Roles include Mozart’s Count Almaviva, Don Alfonso, Leporello and Don Giovanni; Mr. Ford in *Falstaff*; multiple Puccini roles; Luther and Schlemiel in *Les contes d’Hoffmann*; Mr. Gobineau in Menotti’s *The Medium*; multiple roles in *Porgy and Bess*; and Smirnov in William Walton’s *The Bear*.

**KELLY HORSTED** is an enthusiast of new music and has enjoyed a long relationship with American Opera Projects, where he is in his seventh season as a co-music director for the Composers & the Voice series, concluding in fall 2019. Other notable collaborations with AOP include Herschel Garfein’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Tarik O’Regan’s *Heart of Darkness* and Paula Kimper’s *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, as well as *Patience and Sarah* for the chamber opera’s premiere at the Lincoln Center Festival. Horsted was part of the artistic team that performed Tom Cipullo’s *Glory Denied* for UrbanArias and Chelsea Opera. He has been a frequent collaborator at NYU’s Tisch Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program and at Ann Baltz’s OperaWorks in LA. Horsted has appeared at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, and Zankel Hall and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall.

Soprano **AMY JUSTMAN**’s career as a crossover soprano has spanned musical theater, classical music, jazz, pop and beyond. In 2018, she performed in the Broadway revival of *Carousel*, understudying and going on for both Renée Fleming as Nettie Fowler and Jessie Mueller as Julie Jordan. She recently played Polly in *The Threepenny Opera* at Syracuse Opera and returned to the Ravinia Festival this summer to sing Bernstein’s *Mass*, which she previously performed at Carnegie Hall and recorded for Naxos. Other solo engagements include *A Midsummer’s Night Dream* and *Liebeslieder Walzer* with New York City Ballet, *The Mikado* with MasterVoices at Carnegie Hall, and “Disney on Classic” with the Tokyo Philharmonic. Justman was also a first-prize winner of the Kurt Weill Foundation’s Lotte Lenya Competition. Her Broadway credits include the revival of *Company* (recorded for PBS’ *Great Performances*), *In Transit*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder* and *White Christmas*. She can also be seen on the FX series *Fosse/Verdon*. 
Mezzo-soprano Kathryn Krasovec has performed on such prominent stages as the Metropolitan Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, Carnegie Hall, National Theater of Prague and Theater Bremen in Germany. Recent highlights include a performance of The Echo Drift, a thrilling one-woman opera by Mikael Karlsson as Walker Loats, at the 2018 PROTOTYPE Festival. She returned to the Princeton Festival as Mrs. Sedley in Peter Grimes and was the mezzo soloist in the Emmy-winning world premiere of James Aikman’s Peacemakers with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. Krasovec made her Carnegie Hall debut as a soloist in Mohammed Fairouz’s Audenesque with the Mimesis Ensemble. After five years performing various roles in Germany and the Czech Republic, Krasovec debuted at Spoleto Festival USA in the U.S. premiere of Philip Glass’ Kepler. Future engagements include debuts of three new operas with the Virginia Arts Festival and the John Duffy Institute for New Opera.

Countertenor Jordan Rutter, lauded by critics as a “revelation,” has excelled in opera, concert and contemporary repertoire. Most recently he was seen as Doodle in Stefan Weisman and David Cote’s critically acclaimed The Scarlet Ibis with Chicago Opera Theater. Upcoming engagements include rejoining American Opera Projects and NYU for their Opera Writing Workshop. Rutter has maintained a long association with the opera Three Way (Robert Paterson/Cote), performing the world premiere with Nashville Opera and the New York premiere with American Modern Ensemble at BAM, and lending his voice to the premiere recording with American Modern Ensemble. Past credits include standards of the operatic canon and both oratorio and concert engagements. Rutter holds a master’s degree from the Manhattan School of Music.

Baritone Clayton Graves Williams, a native of Detroit, began participating in various fine arts activities at an early age, gaining exposure to the arts and entertainment world. He earned a B.A. in music (voice) from Winston-Salem State University and an M.M., also in voice, from Manhattan School of Music. In 2015, Williams made his New York debut as Escamillo in Carmen. His other notable roles include Dr. Bartolo and Count Almaviva in Le nozze di Figaro in Siena, Italy, Papageno in Die Zauberflöte, Fiorello in Il barbiere di Siviglia, and Sam in Trouble in Tahiti. Williams has also made featured appearances in primetime television shows such as Law & Order: SVU, The Blacklist, Pose, Blindspot, Bull, The Path and Forever. Williams is a recipient of an Emerging Talent Award from the Lotte Lenya Competition. He resides in New York City.

Jillian Zack most recently music-directed Annie at Cape Fear Regional Theater and Les Misérables at Pace University, and returned as a music director to the Mac-Haydn Theater for its 50th season. Season highlights include Cabaret, Mamma Mia! and The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Zack is an assistant faculty member at The Juilliard School. She has been a recital partner throughout the U.S., U.K. and New Zealand, and she maintains a full vocal coaching studio in New York City. Past shows include The Sound of Music, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, Anything Goes, Sweeney Todd, Spamalot, Baby, Annie Get Your Gun, The Full Monty and Into the Woods. Zack has appeared at concert venues including Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall and London’s Wigmore Hall. She is a graduate of Manhattan School of Music and The Juilliard School.
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. tisch.nyu.edu.

Randall Eng founded and leads the NYU/Tisch Opera Lab with Sam Helfrich. Under their guidance, students from the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program have created more than 30 short operas. As a composer, Randall’s music lies at the intersection of opera, music theater and jazz. 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, American Opera Projects, The Town Hall, the Virginia Arts Festival, the Center for Contemporary Opera and Manhattan School of Music. His choral work Remain (a setting of an immigration rights pamphlet) was premiered in 2018 by the MasterVoices Chorus. Other dramatic works include The Dangers of Electric Lighting (Luna Stage), Usher and Falling (Opera Vindaloo Festival), and the video opera The Woman in the Green Coat (Edinburgh Fringe Festival). Non-theatrical works include commissions for Albany Symphony Orchestra’s Dogs of Desire, Mirror Visions Ensemble and Composer’s Voice. Eng 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 is an associate arts professor and head of dramaturgy in the department of Design for Stage and Film at NYU. In addition to his participation in the NYU Opera Lab at Tisch School of the Arts, Helfrich has directed opera productions at New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Portland Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Virginia Opera, Opera Boston, Pittsburgh Opera and Wolf Trap Opera, among others. Recent opera highlights include the world premiere of PermaDeath, a video game opera, with White Snake Productions at the Majestic Theater in Boston; the world premiere of Jeffrey Smith’s Why is Eartha Kitt Trying to Kill Me? at UrbanArias in Washington, D.C.; Mozart’s The Magic Flute with the Indianapolis Symphony; a staging of Haydn’s Creation with the Pittsburgh Symphony; the New York premiere of Angels in America at New York City Opera; the world premiere of Dan Sonenberg’s The Summer King at Pittsburgh Opera; and Bach’s St. John Passion with the Pittsburgh Symphony. Recent theater credits include Arthur Miller’s After the Fall at NYU/Tisch Grad Acting, Off-Broadway productions of Owned, a world-premiere play by Julian Sheppard, Tape by Stephen Belber, and a double bill of plays by Shaw and De Musset at the Franklin Stage Company. Helfrich holds a B.A. in Russian literature and an M.F.A. in theater arts from Columbia University.
ABOUT THE AMERICAN OPERA PROJECT

For over 30 years, AOP has been at the forefront of the contemporary opera movement through its commissioning, developing and producing of opera and music theater projects; community engagement; and training programs for student and emerging composers and librettists. The company is recognized for its cross-genre experimentation in works such as the dance chamber opera *Hagoromo* starring Wendy Whelan (Davis/Pelsue, BAM, 2015); stories of African American history, including *The Summer King* (Sonenberg/Nester/Campbell, Pittsburgh Opera, 2017) and *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed That Line to Freedom* (Okoye, Irondale, 2014); and numerous groundbreaking works on LGBTQ themes like *Paul's Case* (Spears/Walat, UrbanArias, 2015), *Patience and Sarah* (Kimper/Persons, Lincoln Center Festival, 1998) and *As One* (Kaminsky/Campbell/Reed, BAM, 2014), the most widely produced contemporary opera in the U.S. and Canada for the past three years. Matt Gray, General Director; Mila Henry, Artistic Director. [aopopera.org](http://aopopera.org).

ABOUT THE STONEWALL INN

The Stonewall Inn, often shortened to Stonewall, is a gay bar and recreational tavern in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Lower Manhattan, New York City, and the site of the Stonewall Riots of 1969, which is widely considered to be the single most important event leading to the gay liberation movement and the modern fight for LGBTQ rights in the United States. The Inn was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2000. On June 23, 2015, the Stonewall Inn was the first landmark in New York City to be recognized by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission on the basis of its status in LGBTQ history, and on June 24, 2016, the Stonewall National Monument was named the first U.S. national monument dedicated to the LGBTQ rights movement. [thestonewallinnnyc.com](http://thestonewallinnnyc.com).
ABOUT OPERA AMERICA

OPERA America is the national membership organization for artists, administrators, trustees and audiences, dedicated to supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America is committed to developing new work and new audiences, civic practice, artist and leadership development, research, national advocacy and promoting inclusivity that moves opera forward across America.

The quarterly *Opera America* magazine highlights the progress of the opera sector, which has been propelled over the past four decades by OPERA America’s strategic granting of more than $15 million to companies and artists.

In 2012, OPERA America opened its headquarters at the National Opera Center, a custom-built rehearsal and performance facility for opera that serves more than 80,000 annual visitors.
JOIN US FOR THESE FUTURE EVENTS

ANGEL BLUE IN CONVERSATION
Tuesday, October 8, 2019 | 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Meet soprano Angel Blue as she recounts milestones in her journey to the world’s greatest stages.

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HOUSTON GRAND OPERA EMERGING ARTIST RECITAL
Thursday, November 21, 2019 | 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Featuring artists from the Houston Grand Opera Studio.

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NEW WORKS SHOWCASE AT BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC
Thursday, January 16, 2020 | 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Enjoy excerpts from three new North American works presented by American Opera Projects, Music-Theatre Group and the Spoleto Festival USA.

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MINNESOTA OPERA EMERGING ARTIST RECITAL
Thursday, February 13, 2020 | 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Discover up-and-coming talent in this recital featuring artists from the Minnesota Opera Resident Artist Program.

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THE CHALLENGES OF MIXING FAMILY AND CAREER
Monday, February 24, 2020 | 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Meet artists and leaders who have overcome unspoken obstacles to raise families while producing first-rate art. Featuring Ana De Archuleta, Blythe Gaissert, David Lomeli, Sarah Meyer, Talise Trevigne, Christian Van Horn and Jennifer Zetlan.

See the full lineup of upcoming events and register at operaamerica.org/Onstage.

Speak to an OPERA America staff member if you have questions about any of our events or if you are interested in becoming a member.
OPERA America Onstage is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by grants from the Amphion Foundation, Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and NYC & Company Foundation.