SPRING 2017 OPERA SEASON

The Girl of the Golden West
APRIL 1-9

The Hobbit
APRIL 29

Cyrano
MAY 13-21

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

The Spring 2017 Opera Season is sponsored by Cadillac
The Girl of the Golden West

April 1-9, 2017

MUSIC
Giacomo Puccini

LIBRETTO
Guefio Civinini and Carlo Zangarini

WORLD PREMIERE
Metropolitan Opera - New York, New York
Dec. 10, 1910

CONDUCTOR
Stephen Lord

DIRECTOR
Mario Corradi

CHORUS MASTER
Suzanne Mallare Acton

ORIGINAL SET DESIGN
Eugene Lee

Additional Scenery Designed by Scott Marr

COSTUME DESIGN*
Matthew LeFebvre

LIGHTING DESIGN
Kendall Smith

HAIR & MAKEUP DESIGN
Joanne Weaver

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR
Roberto Kalb

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Andrew Neinaber

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER
Christopher Barbeau

STAGE MANGER
Ken Saltzman

SUPERTITLES
Dee Dorsey

*Costumes were created for Minnesota Opera’s production of The Girl of the Golden West by the Minnesota Opera Costume Shop and are owned by Minnesota Opera.

The opening night performance is dedicated in memory of Mr. Mandell L. Berman.
SYNOPSIS

ACT I

A miners’ camp in California, 1849–50. At sunset at the Polka Saloon, Nick, the bartender, prepares for the miners’ return from the hills. Jake Wallace, a traveling minstrel, sings a sentimental song that causes Jim Larkens to break down in tears. The men collect money for his passage back home. Trin and Sonora both bribe Nick to help them win the heart of Minnie, the owner of the bar, with whom all the men are in love. Sid cheats at cards and Jack Rance, the camp’s cynical sheriff, marks him as an outcast. The Wells Fargo agent Ashby arrives with news of the imminent capture of the Mexican bandit Ramírez and his band. An argument breaks out between Rance and Sonora, each claiming Minnie will be his wife. Things almost get out of hand when Minnie herself appears. The men calm down and sit to listen to Minnie’s Bible teaching. Later, alone with her, Rance confesses his love to Minnie (“Minnie, della mia casa”). But she is not interested and, recalling her happy childhood, paints a different picture of her ideal love (“Laggiù nel Soledad”).

A stranger appears in the bar, introducing himself as Dick Johnson from Sacramento. Minnie recognizes him as a man she once met on the road. The jealous Rance orders Johnson to leave town, but when Minnie declares that she knows him, the others welcome Johnson. As he and Minnie dance, the miners drag in a man named Castro, one of Ramírez’s band. Castro pretends that he will lead them to their hideout. He then whispers to Johnson—who is in fact Ramírez—that he let himself be captured to lure the miners away from the saloon, in order for Johnson to rob it. The men depart with Castro, and Minnie and Johnson are left alone. She tells him about her simple life and that she is still waiting for her first kiss. When she shows him the hiding place where the miners keep their gold, he replies that as long as he is nearby, nobody will harm her or touch the gold. She shyly invites him to visit her in her cabin later that evening.

ACT II

In Minnie’s cabin in the mountains, the Indian woman Wowkle sings a lullaby to her baby and bickers with the child’s father, Billy Jackrabbit. Minnie arrives and excitedly prepares for her meeting with Johnson. Alone with him, she gives in to his declarations of love and they kiss. Johnson, full of doubt as to how to tell her about his true identity, is about to leave, but she asks him to stay for the night as it has begun to snow. When several shots are heard, Johnson hides in the closet. Rance appears with some of the men and tells Minnie that they are concerned for her safety—they have discovered that Johnson is Ramírez. Minnie claims to know nothing and the men leave. She then angrily confronts Johnson, who makes excuses about his past and declares that when he met her he decided to give up his former life. Deeply hurt, Minnie sends him away. Another shot rings out. Johnson, wounded, staggers back into the cabin and Minnie hides him in the attic. Rance returns, certain he has found his man, and demands to search the room. Minnie refuses and the sheriff is about to give up when a drop of blood falls on his hand from above. Johnson is forced to surrender, but Minnie has an idea—she challenges Rance to a game of poker. If he defeats her, she will give herself to him; if he loses, Johnson goes free. Minnie cheats and wins. Rance leaves.

ACT III

Johnson has been nursed back to health by Minnie. Again on the run from Rance and his men, he is eventually captured in the forest. As the miners prepare to hang him, Johnson asks for one last mercy—that Minnie believe him free and far away (“Chiella mi creada”). Rance is enraged, but the men hesitate. At that moment, Minnie rides in, wielding a pistol. When her pleas to spare Johnson prove fruitless, she reminds the men how much they owe her. The miners finally give in and release Johnson. He and Minnie ride away to start a new life together.
Suzanne Mallare Acton
Chorus Master
Suzanne Acton has received wide acclaim for her choral direction involving more than 125 productions in seven languages. Conducting credits include West Side Story, Music Man, Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, Daughter of the Regiment, Carmen, La Traviata and Carmina Burana with The Medium for MOT; My Fair Lady and La Traviata for Dayton Opera; Merry Widow and Madame Butterfly for Artpark; and Tosca for Augusta Opera. As founding Director of the MOT Children’s Chorus, Ms. Acton was instrumental in developing the inaugural 2007-2008 season. She is also the Artistic and Music Director of metro Detroit’s Rackham Choir.

Hadleigh Adams
New-Zealand born baritone Hadleigh Adams has received international acclaim for his performances on stage and in concert. He is renowned for his dynamic stage presence and ability to draw true, honest characters in his performances. His broad repertoire spans from Baroque and Bel Canto through Britten and contemporary composition. He has collaborated with some of today’s greatest artists on the concert platform, and on the opera stage.

Dominik Belavy
Baritone Dominik Belavy is a Bachelor of Music student at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Sanford Sylvan. At Juilliard, he has been featured as Thomas Bouché in Kurt Weill's Down in the Valley, L'horloge Comtoise and L'ambre in Ravel's L’enfant et les sortilèges and Conte Perruccetto in Haydn's La fedelta premiata. He also covered Presto in Juilliard’s production of Les mamelles de Tirésias and Kuligin in Janáček’s Kát’a Kabanová. Mr. Belavy has been featured in recital in New York, London and Dublin in Drums and Guns. He recently made his Alice Tully Debut apart of the Wednesday@1 series singing Vaughn-Williams’ Songs of Travel. This season, he will debut at Opera Theatre of St. Louis as a Gerdine Young Artist, singing Yakuside in Madama Butterfly and Trucker Joe and Constable in Ricky Ian Gordon’s The Grapes of Wrath and covering Yamadori in Madama Butterfly and Noah in The Grapes of Wrath.

Jonathan Blalock
Highly acclaimed for his work in 20th and 21st century opera, Jonathan has appeared in a number of world premieres, including Huang Ruó’s An American Soldier with Washington National Opera, The Secret Agent with the Center for Contemporary Opera in NYC and the Armel Festival in Hungary; Jorge Martin’s Before Night Falls with Fort Worth Opera; and Paul’s Case with Urban Arias, which Alex Ross in The New Yorker declared it as one of the top ten musical events of 2014, saying, “The tenor Jonathan Blalock was transfixing in the title role; Spears’s score glistened beautifully and eerily around him.” In addition, Jonathan sang The Electrician in Adès’ Powder Her Face with West Edge Opera, made his Virginia Opera debut as Cégeste in Philip Glass’ Orphée, and has sung in the same composer’s Hydrogen Jukebox with both West Edge Opera and Fort Worth Opera.

Joseph Michael Brent
Joseph Michael Brent is an artist of Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Last season he appeared as 3rd SS Officer in Mieczyslaw Weinberg’s The Passenger, Malcolm in Verdi’s Macbeth, and first armored man in Mozart’s The Magic Flute. In 2015, Mr. Brent made both role and company debuts as Mayor Uphold in the Bronx Opera’s production of Albert Herring and Edgardo in the New York Opera Exchange production of Lucia di Lammermoor. He earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Georgia in the fall of 2014 with a dissertation on selected vocal works of Giovanni Paolo Bottesini. He is a native New Yorker, a proud graduate of the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, and holds an undergraduate degree from the conservatory of music at Purchase College S.U.N.Y. in double bass performance. He was a student of Metropolitan Opera baritone Frederick Bunchinal.

Jeff Byrnes
Baritone Jeff Byrnes returned to Michigan Opera Theatre this season as a Studio Artist. He performed the roles of Schanuard in La Bohème, 1st SS Officer in The Passenger, Old Servant in Elektra and The Bronze in Madama Butterfly. Prior to joining MOT, he performed the role of Owen Hart in Dead Man Walking with Dayton MOT, and he covered Germont in La Traviata and Balstrode in Peter Grimes with Des Moines Metro Opera. Other operatic highlights include Leporello in Don Giovanni and the title role in The Mikado with the Natchez Opera Festival, and Figaro in Le nozze di Figaro, Sprecher in Die Zauberflöte, and Pylate in St. John Passion with CCM Opera. He was a regional finalist in the Rocky Mountain Region of the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions in 2014.

Melissa Citro
In the 2015-16 season Ms. Citro made her Washington Opera debut as Cutrune in their new production of Götterdämmerung, returned to New Orleans Opera as Rosilinde in Die Fledermaus, and made her debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in Mahler’s 2nd Symphony. Recent engagements include her debut with the San Francisco Opera as Freia in Das Rheingold, and Cutrune in Götterdämmerung; and her role debut as Sieglinde in Wagner’s Die Walküre with the Virginia Opera. Last season she covered Senta in Der Fliegende Hollander with San Francisco Opera, and returned to the Metropolitan Opera where she covered Renee Fleming in the title role in Dvorák’s Rusalka. Prior to that, she joined the San Francisco Opera and the Metropolitan Opera...
casts of *The Makropulous Case*, where she covered Karita Mattila as *Emilia*, and made her role debut as Senta in Lyric Opera of Kansas City’s production of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. In the 2014-15 season she performed the role of Rusalka with New Orleans Opera and the title role in *La Wally* in her debut with the Dallas Opera. Future engagements include returning to the role of Minnie in *The Girl of the Golden West* with Opera Colorado.

**Mario Corradi**

Mario Corradi made his MOT debut in 1996 staging *Carmen* and most recently directed the fall 2015 production of *La Bohème* for the company. He began his theatrical career with the Yale University Theatre but, as he could not get rid of his (slight) Italian accent, he moved from acting to directing. Beginning with his debut in Palermo in 1982 with Cimarosa’s *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, Mr. Corradi has worked on all continents except Australia and has added more than 60 titles to his repertoire. He is the first Italian director ever to be invited to do Wagner in Germany.

**Rafael Davila**

Tenor Rafael Davila has quickly risen to be one of the most sought after tenors of his generation. With almost 60 roles already under his belt, in the 2014-15 season he debuted as Des Grieux in Puccini’s *Manon Lescaut* under Maestro Plácido Domingo’s baton in Valencia, Dick Johnson in *The Girl of the Golden West* and Don Jose in *Carmen* for Minnesota Opera, and Cavaradossi in *Leipzig*. 2015-16 engagements included a return to Washington National Opera as Don José in *Carmen*, Opera de Puerto Rico as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* opposite soprano Ana Maria Martinez, his debut with Chicago Lyric Opera in the world premiere of the opera *Bel Canto*, his return to Valencia for *Aida*, his debut with the Macerata Festival as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and his return to Lyric Opera of Kansas City as Don Jose in *Carmen*.

**Nicholas Davis**

Acknowledged for his rolling mellifluous baritone (*Opera Today*), Nicholas Davis is enjoying success both at home and internationally. In 2014, Mr. Davis became the first American to win first prize in the International Antonín Dvořák Singing Competition. The 2015-2016 season saw Mr. Davis’ international debut in concert with the National Theatre Prague under the direction of maestro Libor Pešek. He was also hosted in recital at the American Center for the U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic. Mr. Davis made his Santa Fe Opera debut in the 2016 season as Jake Wallace in *The Girl of the Golden West* and Gregorio in Gounod’s *Rome et Juliette*. This season, Mr. Davis will appear with Chicago Opera Theater, the Janesville Choral Union, debuting with the Chicago Sinfonietta, debuting with Michigan Opera Theatre, and the Glimmerglass Festival.

**Harry Greenleaf**

Baritone Harry Greenleaf is a native of Wixom, Michigan who made his debut with MOT in 2016 in the role of Top in *The Tender Land*. He is a proud alumnus of the Michigan State University College of Music, and received a Master of Music at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Harry has been a Studio Artist with the Wolf Tap Opera Company and an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera. His performances have included roles in *La Traviata*, *Les mamelles de Tirésias*, *The Little Prince*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Carmen*. In addition to *The Girl of the Golden West*, he will perform in MOT’s upcoming production of Cyrano as *Le Bret*.

**Jeff Gwaltney**

Jeremy Gwaltney was awarded the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Scholarship in 2010 and remained at the Washington National Opera under Maestro Domingo’s guidance until 2012. In 2011, he was invited by Francesca Zambello to be a Glimmerglass Young Artist and returned to the festival in 2012.

At Washington National Opera, his roles have included: Abdallo in *Nabucco* and Normanno, as well as First Prisoner in *Fidelio* with the National Symphony Orchestra. His cover roles included Cavaradossi, and Oreste in *Iphigénie en Tauride* and Pinkerton.

**Mark Delavan**

Mark Delavan is known as an international opera star with critically acclaimed performances in *Sweeney Todd* at The David Koch Theater and throughout the world. With his charismatic personality, versatile voices, and incredible guitar skills, this character actor is now in demand on screen and television! Among his operatic credits Mark Delavan counts numerous opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Berliner Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper, Lyric Opera of Chicago, New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Washington National Opera, to name a few. He has performed at such venues as Carnegie Hall and Royal Albert Hall, and his festival credits include the BBC Proms, Edinburgh Festival (UK), Britten Festival (Italy), Spoleto Festival, U.S.A., the Metropolitan Opera’s Concerts in the Park, and the Saito Kinen Festival (Japan), among others.

**Glenn Healy**

Glenn Healy, a native of San Francisco, CA, holds a Bachelor and Master in Music from the University of Michigan. Most recently, Mr. Healy was seen performing Don Inigo Gomez in Ravel’s *L’Heure Espangole* and Simone in Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi* in the University’s riveting double-bill. Outside of his scholastic preparation, Mr. Healy participated in a multitude of training programs throughout Europe. Such
In addition to his opera endeavors, Stephen Lord has conducted at Carnegie Hall for PDQ Bach’s annual concerts and at the Berkshire Choral Festival Institute. He teaches Master Classes at various institutions including Yale University, The Blossom Festival, the Hartt School of Music, and Westminster Choir College, and he serves as an adjudicator in vocal competitions such as the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, Opera America’s George London/Sullivan Grants, and the Richard Tucker Foundation.

**Johnathan McCullough**

Baritone Johnathan McCullough spends the 2016-17 season as both an Emerging Artist at Opera Philadelphia and a Diploma Candidate in Opera at the Curtis Institute of Music. Season highlights include his European debut in a new production of Rameau’s *Zoroastre* with Komische Oper Berlin. Next season highlights include Mr. Groteorex in the World Premiere of *Elizabeth Cree* by Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell as well as Moralés in *Carmen*, both with Opera Philadelphia.

Operatic credits include J. Robert Oppenheimer in *Doctor Atomic*, Il Conte in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Schauard in *La bohème*, Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Papageno in *Die Zaubferlote*, Belcore in *L’élisir d’amore*, Lescaut in *Manon*. Johnathan was also part of the 2012 YAVA summer program at Houston Grand Opera where he covered the title role in the world premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s *Prince of Players*.

Johnathan is a recipient of a 2013 Career Bridges grant and a 2012 George London Foundation Encouragement Award.

**Briana Elyse Hunter**

Briana Elyse Hunter is a Studio Artist with the Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Her previous credits include Jo March in Michigan Opera Theatre’s Little Women, as well as roles in Carmen, Cendrillon, Die Fledermaus, Iolanta, Summer and Smoke, Silent Night and Ragtime. She has worked under the direction of The Royal Shakespeare Company as both actress and vocal soloist in an original production For Every Passion Something that premiered at the Fringe Festival in Scotland. She was a 2014 recipient of the Lys Symonette award in the KWF’s Lotte Lenya Competition. She has been on the rosters of Santa Fe Opera, Knoxville Opera, American Opera Projects, Opera in the Heights, I SING BEIJING, Sarasota Opera, El Paso Opera, and Music Academy of the West where she sang the title role of Carmen under the tutelage of the great Marilyn Horne.

**Stephen Lord**

Stephen Lord joined Michigan Opera Theatre as Principal Conductor in November 2016 and he will lead the company’s artistic activities through the 2018-19 season.Opera News named Lord one of the “25 Most Powerful Names in U.S. Opera” (one of four conductors). He is continually praised for conducting both traditional and contemporary operatic works of his debut with San Francisco Opera, conducting Rigoletto, one critic observed, “He partnered his singers perfectly and gave everything its proper weight – he was master of the score’s details and the orchestra played superbly for him.” He is currently music director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and was music director of Boston Lyric Opera. He now serves as artistic director of opera studies at the New England Conservatory, overseeing all aspects of the opera training program and conducting one main stage production a year.

**Meagan Miller**

Acclaimed for the expansive colors, rich tones and texture of her voice, soprano Meagan Miller is making celebrated debuts on important stages worldwide, interpreting the leading ladies of Mozart, Strauss, Verdi and Wagner. Her compelling stage presence, intelligently nuanced portrayals and varied repertoire have been applauded at such distinguished opera houses as the Bayerische Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Hamburg State Opera, New National Theatre Tokyo, Metropolitan Opera, Oper Leipzig, Opera Monte Carlo, Teatro Massimo di Palermo, Volksoper Wien, Washington National Opera, and Wiener Staatsoper, among others. Orchestral engagements have taken Ms. Miller to such venues as Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw, Hong Kong’s Cultural Center, Los Angeles’ Hollywood Bowl, Melbourne’s Hamer Hall, Minneapolis’ Orchestra Hall, New York’s Avery Fisher Hall and Carnegie Hall, Rotterdam’s De Dolen, Scotland’s Edinburgh International Festival, and Washington, DC’s Kennedy Center.

**Jesus Vicente Murillo**

A native of Detroit, Bass-Baritone Jesus Vicente Murillo made his professional debut at the age of 18 with Michigan Opera Theatre as The Android in *The Very Last Green Thing* and returns to MOT as Jose Castro in *The Girl of the Golden West*. Mr. Murillo’s career has included appearances with The Ohio Light Opera as Kalman Zsupan in *Der Zigeunerbaron*, Giorgio in *The Condoliers*, Mr. Jackson in *Silk Stockings*, and Jenkins in *Lady, Be Good!*, Arbor Opera Theater as Colline in *La bohème*; Main Street Opera Theater as King Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*; Seagle Music Colony as Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, and Bill Calhoun in *Kiss Me, Kate*; The University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society as Giuseppe Palmieri in *The Condoliers*, King Hildebrand in *Princess Ida*, and Sir Marmaduke in *The Sorcerer*. For the rest of the 2016-17 season, he will be performing Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* with Opera Louisiane, Bob Noxious in *The Final Battle for Love* with Thompson Street Opera, and will be covering Ali Hakim in *Oklahoma*, and Count Cepriano in *Rigoletto* with Charlottesville Opera.

**Dennis Petersen**

Through his innate sense of style, command of languages, and superior acting abilities, tenor Dennis Petersen is sought after for a variety of operatic
roles, including Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde*, Florestan in *Fidelio*, the Captain in *Wozzeck*, Aegisth in *Elektra*, Canio in *Pagliacci*, and the title role in *Peter Grimes*.

**Benjamin Robinson**

Benjamin Robinson, described as a “charming lyric tenor,” is a native of Raleigh, North Carolina and is progressively becoming known for his “emphatic characterizations” and “easy vocal production and... luscious instrument.” This season Benjamin sang Basilio/Curzio in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Salt Marsh Opera, Larry/Matt in *The Face on the Barroom Floor* with Chelsea Opera (“musically strong, dramatically satisfying” – Opera News) and the Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings.

**Brent Michael Smith**

Brent Michael Smith is an artist of Michigan Opera Theatre Studio. Last year he was an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera, where his performance as Billy Jackrabbit in *The Girl of the Golden West* received critical acclaim by Opera News as a “standout.” Colorado Music Buzz praised him for “making the most of his brief appearances.”

He received his Master of Music degree under the tutelage of John Hines. He received his Bachelor’s in music in piano performance from Hope College (Holland, MI). Mr. Smith is a first-place winner in the Grand Rapids Opera Competition (2012).

**Kendall Smith**

Lighting Designer

Kendall Smith has designed lighting for more than 70 productions with MOT, making his debut in 1988 with *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and most recently designed lighting for the company’s spring 2015 production of *The Merry Widow*. His work has been featured in numerous productions by respected companies, theaters, and festivals including Florida Grand Opera, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Minnesota Opera, and Walnut Street Theatre.

**Joanne Middleton Weaver**

Wig and Makeup Designer

Born in England, Joanne Weaver came to the U.S. in the late 1980s. She began apprenticing with what was then Washington Opera, now Washington National Opera. Ms. Weaver has since designed at many opera companies throughout the U.S., including Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Des Moines Metro Opera. Her notable MOT credits include *The Magic Flute, Macbeth, The Passenger, Frida, The Merry Widow, Faust, Margaret Garner, Cyrano* and *The Pearl Fishers*.

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**Honigman celebrates the Michigan Opera Theatre’s 2016-2017 season.**
The George Washington steamed into New York harbor on 16 November 1910, in time for Giacomo Puccini to join rehearsals of *The Girl of the Golden West* (also known as “La fanciulla del West”) at the Old Metropolitan Opera. Puccini’s career spanned 40 years, though a total output of 12 operas attests to a painstaking self-criticism and review of potential subject matter. The composer had often struggled to find stories that inspired his imagination, though the novelty of a Western set in the Sierra Nevadas had recently sparked a creative flurry. Puccini first crossed the Atlantic in 1907 to supervise the American premiere of *Madama Butterfly*. While here he saw many plays, including *The Girl of the Golden West* by David Belasco, the “Bishop of Broadway,” known for his eccentric demeanor, cleric-collared shirts, and unwavering commitment to theatrical realism. As with *Madama Butterfly* before it, it would be Belasco’s words that inspired Puccini’s only American saga.

While the composer may have been growing tired of “Bohème, Butterfly and company,” they established a burgeoning American market for his music, magnifying his fame worldwide and a demand for new operas. The exotic element of the American West and the golden girl’s Broadway success naturally appealed to Puccini, though he still had only an elementary understanding of English—and of the play’s content for that matter. He sent his copy of the script to the Italian poet Carlo Zangarini (whose mother was from Colorado), and the three-year process of translating and transforming Belasco’s play into *The Girl of the Golden West* began.

In June 1910, after two years wrought by personal scandal and public embarrassment, Puccini formally signed a contract with the Metropolitan Opera to bring his American opera to the stage. The management also granted his request that the premiere be conducted by Arturo Toscanini, with assistance in the staging provided by Belasco himself. He was also granted luxury casting with arguably the two greatest voices of the day scheduled to create the roles of Johnson and Minnie: the Italian tenor Enrico Caruso, and the Czech soprano Emmy Destinn. Puccini had already heard Caruso sing Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) in 1907, and though he was never an overly enthusiastic proponent of the tenor, he was assured that he would carry the role of Johnson admirably. The beloved Bohemian of the operatic world, Emmy Destinn had become one of the most sought-after singers from New York to London and Berlin, revered especially for her interpretation of the title roles in Richard Strauss’s *Salome* and Puccini’s *Tosca*.

Caruso and Destinn first sang together at the Metropolitan Opera during her debut season of 1908; in that season alone they appeared opposite each other in *Aïda, Madama Butterfly, Pagliacci*, and more. This also marked the first season when the Met was not managed by Austro-German impresarios. Two years later, *The Girl of the Golden West* was the first commission made by the Met’s new Italian managers, a major upheaval from its traditional repertory of Wagner, Bellini, Gounod, and Verdi. The Caruso-Destinn duo was together again, and failure was not an option.

Belasco later wrote in his memoirs: “It was necessary to harmonize this incongruous collection of nationalities and make them appear as Western gold-miners – to create through them an atmosphere of the wild Californian days of 1849... Never before had I dealt with a more tractable and willing company of stage people.” The playwright hailed from San Francisco, born there during the Gold Rush in 1853; there was only one American
cast in the opera, while the rest of the cast included 10 Italians, a Bohemian, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, and two Germans. On Belasco rested the responsibility of capturing the Wild West in the stage action, along with the added challenge of teaching the singers how to carry themselves as Americans. There was also the issue of "kissing like an American," in which Belasco had to direct Caruso away from his Italian instincts, a scene amusingly captured by a Times reporter: "No, he doesn't grab hold of her roughly. He comes forward this way, see? With his arms out-stretched. Just a little one [kiss]." For his own part, the reporter of this incident boasted, "People will pay $10 a seat and $120 for grand tier boxes next Saturday night, but they won't see Belasco show Caruso how to kiss a young lady saloonkeeper. Money can't buy everything.

On 10 December 1910 came the true "first night" for the Metropolitan Opera, and by all reports, the golden girl's premiere was flawless in every way. The audience included J. Pierpont Morgan, John Jacob Astor, the Guggenheim and Vanderbilt families, as well as Blanche Bates—the stage and early film actress who had created the role of Minnie on Broadway—who, it was said, left the performance in tears. The Times reported: "Miss Destinn in the title role earned new laurels, both as singer and actress. She portrayed the simple charm of the girl and also showed the tremendous depths of the first love that had come into her life. She sang as she never had here before, particularly in the second act, when her vocal art was taxed to the utmost." And Caruso, a seasoned hunter and relatively rugged individual as far as opera singers go, was lauded that "Despite his nationality he looked the part, and he acted it with naturalness. Vocally he was glorious... In the final duet his voice and Miss Destinn's had appealing qualities that brought tears to many eyes." Puccini was elated: "I am unutterably happy. The performance has been perfect. I have no doubt now of its success;" while Belasco, reminiscing about childhood scenes and his own forty-niner father, stated that "the scenes I loved so well ... were glorified by the art of the greatest living composer, Giacomo Puccini." No fewer than 55 curtain calls were offered to the composer and cast throughout the evening, and at the final curtain, Puccini was presented a solid silver wreath designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany himself.

The premiere of The Girl of the Golden West sparked a windfall off new “American” works, inspired by armchair adventures in the West, Native American legends, immigrant stories, and adaptations of Old World classics. It opened America as an operatic topic – “operatized America,” as one commentator put it – painting in musical drama the clash of classes, races, money and morality, and cultures present in the western United States during the Gold Rush. With The Girl of the Golden West, Puccini’s inventiveness and command of the orchestra, the realism and novelty of the story, and its happy ending transported the folklore of the Wild West from the dirt-floored big tops of Buffalo Bill’s traveling shows to the stages of the world’s finest opera houses. It’s in one of those temples of art that we still enjoy this classic work of Americana, produced by an Italian for the ages.

The April 1 performance is dedicated in memory of Mr. Mandell ‘Bill’ Berman, Michigan Opera Theatre Trustee 2001 - 2016.

Bill Berman was a longtime supporter of Michigan Opera Theatre and an avid Detroit philanthropist. Bill was a former Trustee and donor whose contributions spanned decades. After returning to Detroit from serving in World War II as a U.S Naval officer, Bill launched a prolific development company, building homes and apartments all across the Midwest. Along with his wife Madge, Bill was committed to making a difference in the lives of others. As a leader in the community, he served as president of the Council of Jewish Federations of North America and co-founded the Jewish Education Service of North America. Bill and Madge later founded the Berman Theatre at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield and the Berman Center for Jewish Education at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield. Their generosity has impacted the lives of many and enriched Detroit’s cultural community. Bill’s presence at MOT will be truly missed. In honor of his commitment and all that the Bermans have contributed to MOT, the April 1 performance of The Girl Of The Golden West is dedicated to his memory. Bill Berman, 1917 - 2016.
MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE ORCHESTRA – THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

VIOLIN I
Eliot Heaton, Concertmaster +
Laura Roelofs, Assistant Concertmaster +
Molly Hughes +
Bryan Johnston +
Velda Kelly +
Charlotte Merkerson, Concertmaster Emeritus +
Andrew Wu +
Yuri Popowycz
Jenny Wan

VIOLIN II
Victoria Halton, Principal +
Kevin Filewych +
Henrik Karapetyan +
Sherri Marttila
Jacqueline Nutting

ELIZABETH ROWIN
Judith Teasdale

JOHN MADISON, Principal +
Scott Stefanko +
Barbara Zmich +
McCliean +
Catherine Franklin
James Creer
Julianne Zinn

Nadine Deleury, Principal +
Daniel Thomas +
Andrea Yun +
Katri Ervamaa
Stefan Koch
Irina Tikhonova

Jon Luebke
Robert Stiles

Lara Larson, Acting Principal +
Dennis Carter
Jung Wan Kang
Helen Near

Sally Heffelfinger - Pituch +

Brian Bowman, Principal +
J. William King +
Chad Burrow
Lisa Raschiatore

BASSON
Gregory Quick, Acting Principal +
Roger Maki-Schramm

OBOE
Nermis Miseses, Principal +
Lydia Dempsey
Stephanie Shapiro

ENGLISH HORN
Sally Heffelfinger - Pituch +

CLARINET
Brian Bowman, Principal +

TROMBONE
David Jackson, Acting Principal +
Gary Hellick

BASSOON
Gregory Quick, Acting Principal +

HORN
Andrew Pelletier, Principal +
Carrie Banfield-Taplin +
David Dennistong

TRUMPET
David Ammer, Principal +

CELESTE
Jean Schneider

+ Michigan Opera Theatre Core Orchestra
Detroit Federation of Musicians Local #5
American Federation of Musicians

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE ORCHESTRA – CYRANO

VIOLIN I
Eliot Heaton, Concertmaster +
Laura Roelofs, Assistant Concertmaster +
Molly Hughes +
Bryan Johnston +
Velda Kelly +
Beth Kirton +
Charlotte Merkerson, Concertmaster Emeritus +
Andrew Wu +
Yuri Popowycz
Jenny Wan

VIOLIN II
Victoria Halton, Principal +
Kevin Filewych +
Henrik Karapetyan +
Daniel Stachyra +

ELIZABETH ROWIN

JOHN MADISON, Principal +
Scott Stefanko +
Leisl DeShazor-Adams
Catherine Franklin
James Creer
Julianne Zinn

Nadine Deleury, Principal +
Daniel Thomas +
Andrea Yun +
Katri Ervamaa
Andrew McIntosh
Irina Tikhonova

Jon Luebke
Jean Posekany

Christopher James, Acting Principal +
Jung Wan Kang
Brandon LePage

Sally Heffelfinger - Pituch +

Brian Bowman, Principal +

TROMBONE
David Jackson, Acting Principal +

BASSOON
Gregory Quick, Acting Principal +
Roger Maki-Schramm

HORN
Andrew Pelletier, Principal +
Kristi Crago
David Dennistong
Tamara Kosinski

TRUMPET
David Ammer, Principal +

CELESTE
Jean Schneider

+ Michigan Opera Theatre Core Orchestra
Detroit Federation of Musicians Local #5
American Federation of Musicians

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE CHORUS – THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

Tenor
Adrian Leskiw
Bradley Lieto
Bradley Miller
Jason Thomas
Brett Thompson
Jeffrey Wilkinson

Joseph Edmonds
Kurt Frank
Glenn Healy
Brandon Hood
Matthew Konopacki
Miroslav Manovski
David Moan

Pette Moore
Paolo Pacheco
Luke Randall
Brandon Spencer
Gregory Stinson
Justin Watson
Norman Weber

Soprano
Brandy Adams
Molly Bruner
Claire Chardon
Fidelia Darmakhsh
Nicole Joseph
Mary Martin
Valerie Martinez
Sandra Period
Heidi Bowen Zook

Tenor
Gregory Ashe
Fred Buchalter
Mark Craig
Darren DeWitt
Michael Fowler
Mark Istratie
Richard Jackson, Jr.
Bradley Lieto
Ron Reinhart
Jason Thomas
Brett Thompson
Jeffrey Wilkinson
Christopher Wolf

Alto
Andrea Apel
Misty Barnes
Yvonne Friday
Leslie Mason
Anna Nadasky
Diane Schoff
Tiffinie Waldron
Tamara Whitly
Chantel Woodard

Bass
Joseph Edmonds
Brandon Hood
Matthew Konopacki
Brandon Langeland
Miroslav Manovski
David Moan
Paolo Pacheco
Luke Randall
Ken Shepherd
Brandon Spencer
Kevin Starnes
Gregory Stinson
David Twigg
Justin Watson

The American Guild of Musical Artists is the official union of the Michigan Opera Theatre Chorus.
PHOTOGRAPHY, RECORDING & COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES
Photography or recording during any performance is strictly prohibited. You are welcome to take photographs in the lobby before or after a performance and during intermission. As a courtesy to our guests, please switch all electronic devices to silent mode and refrain from using them during the performance.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
Doctors and parents are advised to leave their seat location (located on ticket) and our emergency number, (313) 237-3257, with their service or sitter in case of an emergency. Please observe the lighted exit signs located throughout the theater. In the event of an emergency, please remain calm and walk - do not run - to the nearest exit. Our ushers are trained to lead you out of the building safely. A trained Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) is onsite during most events. Please see an usher or staff member to contact the EMT.

RESTROOMS
Ladies’ restrooms are located off the Ford Lobby (Broadway Street entrance), down the stairs; and on the third floor (Madison Street entrance) - press “3R” on the elevator to reach this facility. Gentlemen’s restrooms are located under the Grand Staircase and also on the third floor (Broadway Street side) - press “3” on the elevator to reach this facility. All third floor restrooms are wheelchair accessible. A unisex, wheelchair accessible restroom is located in the Cadillac Opera Café.

NO SMOKING
The Detroit Opera House is a smoke-free facility.

USHERS
Ushers are stationed at the top of each aisle. If you have a question or concern, please inform an usher, who will contact management. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer usher, please call the House Manager at (313) 237-3252.

LOST & FOUND
Lost and Found is located in the Safety and Security Department. Please see an usher if you have misplaced an article, or call (313) 961-3500 if you have already left the theater. Items will be held in Lost and Found for 30 days.

SERVICES
Concessions stands are located on all levels. Please note that food and drinks are not permitted in the auditorium at any time.

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IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION
Website: www.MichiganOpera.org
EMERGENCIES: (313) 237-3257
Michigan Opera Theatre: (313) 961-3500
General Information: (313) 961-3500
Lost and Found: (313) 961-3500
Ticket Office: (313) 237-7464
Theater Rental Information: (313) 237-3412
Detroit Opera House Fax: (313) 237-3403
Press and Public Relations: (313) 237-3403
Herman Frankel | Opera House Parking Center: (313) 965-4052

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE
VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION

Greetings from the MOT Volunteer Association.

I have been an opera lover for many years and Michigan Opera Theatre is very important to me. Our MOTVA volunteers provide the company with a tremendous level of support. We have more than 700 members who serve as ushers, tour guides, and Boutique volunteers. Our Divas and Divos provide artist hospitality, and the Opera League and Dance Council members hold parties to celebrate moments such as opening night performances. Our members logged almost 20,000 volunteer hours last year. Bravi!!

If you are not yet a volunteer please consider joining us! Volunteering is a great way to meet other interesting and involved patrons, and your MOTVA membership is tax deductible. For membership information please view the MOTVA web page at michiganopera.org/working-with-us/volunteer or call Rachele Wright at 313.237.3402. Rachele would be happy to speak with you and connect you with those volunteering in support of Michigan Opera Theatre.

This season we are celebrating the creation of Michigan Opera Theatre, as we honor the career of our Founder and Artistic Director, David DiChiera. His vision of an opera company for Michigan and an Opera House in Detroit first took shape 46 years ago. Many, many volunteers have traveled this journey with Dr. DiChiera, assuring the success of this company. To those who currently support us through the generous support of your gifts of time, I offer my sincere thanks. To those reading about our volunteer program for the first time, please consider joining.

Sincerely,

Terry Shea, President, MOTVA

MOTVA Committees, Chair(s)
Boutique, Leo Dovelle
Dance Films, Larry Glowczewski
Divas and Divos, Helen Arnoldi-Rowe
Opera House Tour Guides, Myrna Maze
Opera League, Dodie David
Publicity, Annette Marchesi
Secretary, Nancy Moore
Special Events, Gwen Bowlby, Don Jensen & Curtis Posuniak
Ushers, Kathie Booth

Past Presidents
Steven Marlette, Dodie David, Betty Brooks, Gloria Clark