

Prelude Opera presents...

Operapalooza!

**Mystery
on the
Docks**

&

**A
Muskrat
Lullaby**

Children's Operas by Edward Barnes



Sat, October 5, 2024, 4:30 p.m. Our Saviour's Atonement Lutheran Church 178 Bennett Ave

Sun, October 6, 2024, 4:30 p.m. St Francis Cabrini Shrine 701 Fort Washington Ave

Sat, October 12, 2024. 4:30 p.m. Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church 152 West 66th Street

Sun, October 13, 2024, 4:30 p.m. St Francis Cabrini Shrine 701 Fort Washington Ave

BIOGRAPHIES

Muskrat/Criminal Rat - Matthew Youngblood

Matthew Youngblood is a native of Benton, Kentucky. He holds degrees in voice performance from Florida State University and Vanderbilt University. During his studies at FSU, Mr. Youngblood served as a Graduate Assistant and maintained a studio of undergraduate voice students. Past roles include Lord Tolloller in *Iolanthe*, Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi*, and Florville in *Il Signor Bruschino* with Bronx Opera, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Queens Summer Vocal Institute, Javier in *Luisa Fernanda*, Mitch in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Florida State Opera. He is also experienced in Oratorio, having sung solos in the Mozart Requiem with the Blair School of Music, the St. John Passion and Messiah with Florida State University as well as Uriel in Haydn's *Creation* with the Tallahassee Community Choir. Mr. Youngblood is a two year winner of the Hannah J. Beaulieu voice competition at Florida State University.

Spider/Criminal Rat - Sara Henry

Versatile mezzo-soprano Sara Henry has charmed audiences around the world, singing leading and supporting roles in more than 50 different operas. Highlights of her career have included the roles of Semiramide (Semiramide), Donna Elvira (Don Giovanni), Orfeo (Orfeo ed Euridice) Diana (La Calisto), Adalgisa (Norma), and Giovanna Seymour (Anna Bolena), as well as a host of Handelian heroes, including the title roles in *Xerxes*, *Ariodante*, and *Giulio Cesare*. In addition to singing, she is known for writing and producing witty English language adaptations of classic operatic repertoire. This March, she will appear in the title role of Bizet's *Carmen* with Palisades Opera.

Bird/Criminal Rat - Joanie Brittingham

Joanie Brittingham is a soprano, writer, and the editor of *Classical Singer Magazine*. Praised for “dramatic versatility” (*Opera News*), “meltingly beautiful” interpretations (*Forbes*), “lovely soprano” and “lucid diction” (*New York Times*), “captivating stage presence” (*New York Classical Review*), and “full-bodied voice” (*Tulsa World*), all while demonstrating “strength and resistance” (*Opera Wire*) throughout “outstanding solo work” (*New York Concert Review*), Brittingham has performed at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, and Symphony Space and with Riverside Theatre, the New Ohio Theatre, Fresh Squeezed Opera, New Amsterdam Opera, Opera on Tap, Chelsea Opera, the New Works Festival with OPERA America, American Lyric Theatre, and VHRP Live, among others. Brittingham is the author of *Practicing for Singers* and has contributed to many classical music textbooks. Brittingham's writing has been described as “breathless comedy” and having “real wit” (*New York Classical Review*). Brittingham is the librettist for the opera *Serial Killers and the City*, which premiered with *Experiments in Opera*, and will be a part of *New Wave Opera's Night of the Living Opera*. On Instagram and TikTok: @joaniebrittingham.

Toad/Criminal Rat - Brian Alvarado

Brian J. Alvarado's ‘liquid baritone of great charm,’ ‘precise pater elocution,’ and ‘highly attractive legato’ (*Parterre Box*) has featured recently as both Falke in *La Chauve-Souris* and the Baritone in *The Four Note Opera* (Festival d'art vocal de Montréal; Orchestre Classique de Montréal), Silvio in *Pagliacci* (New Rochelle Opera), Angelotti in *Tosca* (Opera Vermont), Eugene Johnson in *Blind Injustice* (Opera Theatre of the Rockies), Tom in *Un ballo in maschera* (Opera Project Columbus), and Mountarat in *Iolanthe* and Simone/Filiberto in *Gianni Schicchi/Il Signor Bruschino* (Bronx Opera). He has portrayed an ‘appropriately sardonic Leporello’ (*Indie Opera Podcast*) with Bronx Opera, Long

Island Lyric Opera, Lighthouse Opera, and Amore Opera. Other roles include Papageno and Sprecher (Die Zauberflöte), Dandini (La cenerentola), Schaunard (La bohème), Betto (Gianni Schicchi), Frank (Die Fledermaus), Mercurio (Roméo et Juliette), and the title roles in Venus and Adonis, The Sorcerer, and Sweeney Todd. Solo concert work includes Handel's Messiah, Bach's BWV 147, Keiser's Markuspasion, Haydn's Nicolaimesse, Mozart's Vesperae solennes de confessore and Missa Brevis in G Major, Schubert's Mass in G, and Gounod's St. Cecilia Mass. The Bronx native has appeared chorally at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and National Sawdust, among many others. He is excited to return to Prelude Opera, where he has previously appeared as The Wolf/Woodsman in Little Red Riding Hood, and Osmin in The Billy Goats Gruff.

Boss Alligator/Criminal Rat - Jonathan Harris

Bass-baritone Jonathan Z. Harris is a native New Orleanian opera singer, recitalist, and actor based in New York City. A two-time Regional Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Jonathan has previously been an Apprentice Artist with Sarasota Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Opera Saratoga, and Chautauqua Opera. He has also sung with Opera Company of Middlebury, Bronx Opera, Opéra Louisiane, and dell'Arte Opera Ensemble, among others. Roles include Leporello (Don Giovanni), Don Alfonso (Cosi fan tutte), Papageno (The Magic Flute), Publio (La clemenza di Tito), Don Basilio (Il barbiere di Siviglia), Peter Quince (A Midsummer Night's Dream), Superintendent Budd (Albert Herring), and the King (Eight Songs for a Mad King). Theatre credits include Salome and The Importance of Being E(a)rnest Hemingway with M-34 and Love & Geography with Piehole. Jonathan holds degrees in theatre arts from Brown University and in music from the University of Michigan. www.jonathanzharris.com

Ralph/Alligator - Shane Brown

Shane Brown was born in Ocean City, NJ and began singing classical music at a young age. After performing in community opera and operetta and graduating from ChARTer Tech High School for the Performing Arts, Shane went on to study voice at Rutgers University. Since then, Shane has regularly appeared in opera roles and concert performances, as a chorister and soloist, as well as voice acting in the greater New York area. More recently, Shane has become specialized in new music as a regular performer with the New York based Curiosity Cabinet Ensemble, Fresh Squeezed Opera, and more. By day, Shane works as an office manager where he brings the skills learned on stage to the corporate world. Coming up, Shane is set to debut the role of The Devil in the premiere of Whitney George's No Man's Land in 2025.

Big Al/Alligator - Seth Gilman

Seth Gilman is a graduate of Mannes College of Music, with a master's from the University of Michigan. Seth is active in new and early music. He is proud to have premiered many works by living composers, both established and emerging. Recent performances of note have included Untitled Theater Company # 61's Cabaret in Captivity, concerts with Opera on Tap and New Brew, and the premieres of Experiments in Opera's Five Ways to Die, of Natalie Elizabeth Weiss's opera about Ida Craddock, Borderland, of Larry Lipkis's opera, Simonetta, with the American Chamber Opera Company, and of chamber works with Random Access Music. In addition to performing, Seth has been a music critic for Examiner.com and curated shows for New Brew and Spectrum, the latter in which selected ensembles explored performance of new music on historical instruments, and early music according to principles of contemporary performance practice.

Edwina Bombastina/Alligator - Elizabeth Treat

Praised by critics for her "brilliant high notes", along with "stunning" and "impressive" coloratura, soprano Elizabeth Treat has performed leading roles with Bronx Opera, Washington Opera Society, Light Opera of New Jersey, Utopia Opera, Opera Theatre of Montclair, Regina Opera, Opera Camerata of Washington, Amore Opera, and Prelude Opera. Notable roles include Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, the title role in Flotow's *Martha*, Marie in *La Fille du Régiment*, Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Career highlights include a 2019 solo debut at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, and several American premieres with Metropolitan Opera conductor Gregory Buchalter. Elizabeth holds performance degrees in both piano and voice, with highest honors. Offstage, Elizabeth is a director in corporate finance and an amateur nature photographer.

Narrator - Sarah Ziegler

Sarah Ziegler Blair is a musical theater performer and writer. She is the co-writer of *Just Between the All of Us* (winner of the Reva Shiner Comedy award with a production at the Bloomington Playwright's Project), *The Brontës* (production at The Space Theatre in London), *Alex Gold: Stuck on Repeat* (available for licensing), *In BeTween* (available for licensing), and *The Teens 'n Tweens Songbook* (available for purchase). Sarah is a graduate of Hamilton College and The Boston Conservatory. Favorite roles include Little Red Riding Hood in *Little Red Riding Hood: A Children's Opera* (with the fabulous Prelude Opera!), Jane in *Leave it to Jane* (Musicals Tonight!), *Laurey in Oklahoma!* (Tent Theatre, MO), Jane in *Pirates!* (Huntington Theatre), and Annie Oakley in *Annie Get Your Gun* (Millbrook Playhouse). Sarah is the founder of Musical Muffins, music classes for babies and toddlers with original tunes. Most of all, Sarah loves spending time writing and performing silly songs with her sons, Arlo and Hughie.

Musical Director/Pianist - Christine Pulliam Melamed

Christine Pulliam Melamed founded Prelude Opera in 2017 with the production of *Three Little Pigs*. As an opera pianist she has worked for Bronx Opera, the Atlantic Music Festival, Masterworks Festival, Opera Company of Brooklyn and *Dramma per Musica*. A piano instructor since 1994, she was previously on the piano faculty of the Levine School of Music in Washington D.C. and also taught piano and music history at The King's College. Past solo and chamber performances include the Opus Nine Ensemble, The Washington Sinfonietta, University of Wisconsin, and Malacañang Palace in the Philippines. A fan of new music, she has premiered piano works by Frank Felice and Benjamin C. S. Boyle and an operetta by Joshua Bornfield. A native of Indianapolis, Ms. Melamed graduated from Butler University summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance and minor in journalism. She received a Master of Music degree in piano performance from the University of Maryland and a Master of Music in collaborative piano from The Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University.

Stage Director - Benjamin Spierman

Benjamin Spierman's direction of *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Opera San José was hailed by Opera Today as "...riveting stuff, and almost faultless in its dramatic shape and emotional impact." Ben is General Director at Bronx Opera, where he directed NYC première productions of Kirke Mechem's *The Rivals*, Vaughan Williams' *The Poisoned Kiss*, and the Weber/Mahler posthumous collaboration *Die drei Pintos*. Regional engagements include *Madama Butterfly* at Indianapolis Opera; *Turandot* at Dayton Opera; *Norma* for St. Petersburg Opera; *The Magic Flute* for Opera Idaho; and *La bohème* with Syracuse Opera. Other work in and around NYC includes *Falstaff* and *Cendrillon* for Rutgers (both winners of National Opera Association prizes) and a blackbox production of *Ariadne auf Naxos* for NYC's dell'Arte

Opera Ensemble (winner of the American Prize) and Eugene Onegin for Utopia Opera and Vaughan Williams' Sir John in Love for Bronx Opera. Mr. Spierman is a native and resident of The Bronx with his wife and frequent artistic collaborator, soprano Hannah Spierman.

Stage Manager - Holly Thomas

Holly is a tetris wizard, which has been very useful for transporting sets for Prelude Opera since its first production in 2017. She has also been known to play tetris and stage manage for New Camerata Opera, Manhattan School of Music and Rutgers University. She is very passionate about Oreos.

Set Designer - April Bartlett

April M. Bartlett is an Emmy award winning visual artist specializing in storytelling and is inspired by the limitless potential of an undefined space. She is the program head for the Design and Production Department at Sands College of Performing Arts at Pace University. April is a production designer, scenic designer, educator, coordinator, and maker. April's daughter, Mabelyn (almost 7y), is a budding scenic artist and helped paint the set for Operapalooza!

Costume Director - Eric Lamp

Eric Lamp is thrilled to return to Prelude for Operapalooza, after our super fun production of Magic Flute. Eric is a Costume Designer, Tenor, Actor and Dancer who loves Show Business, and making a check in it:) Love to Angel, and toi toi toi to the wonderful Cast and Crew.

Props Master - Olivia Ronald

Olivia is known as a prop wizard, and has fabricated props for TV, film and theater productions of all shapes and sizes. One time she made fake pastries that looked so real an actor accidentally took a bite. She enjoys

baking, listening to audiobooks, and her most recent hobby discovery — flying trapeze.

Police - Benjamin Spierman, Samantha Bailey, Arlo Blair, Nathan Melamed, Joseph Melamed, Rosa Yamaya

Tech Crew - Ella Dugdale, Charlie Lopez, Johanna Omesuh, Asaph Strickman

Carpenters - Chris Zaborowski and RJ Romeo

Ushers - Leslie Austin, Harry Bleattler, Jared Catalan, Matthew Kaal, Alana Trimmier

Videography/Photography - Jonathan Rothermel/Cursive Films

Website - Sara Henry

Artwork - Laura Winslow

ABOUT THE OPERAS

Edward Barnes was born in 1958 and is an award-winning composer, producer and public speaker. His work has been seen on and off-Broadway, in concert halls, opera houses and theaters around the world.

A Muskrat Lullaby is based on the children's book by Thacher Hurd, Mama Don't Allow and was commissioned by Los Angeles Opera and premiered in Los Angeles in 1993. Mystery on the Docks was commissioned jointly by the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Los Angeles Opera and Opera Columbus, a joint commission funded by the Reader's Digest/Meet the Composer Fund. Based on the book of the same name by Thacher Hurd, it premiered in Kansas City in 1995.

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world. A graduate of the Juilliard School, he is the winner of Guggenheim and NEA Fellowships, the Stephen Sondheim Award for “innovative musical theater”, and has been a resident artist at Ucross (Wyoming), Fundación Valparaíso (Spain), and the Instituto Sacatar (Brazil). Edward’s producing credits include Tracy Letts’ play, Superior Donuts, on Broadway, You Are Here for NyLon Fusion Collective off-Broadway, Ricky Ian Gordon’s The Grapes of Wrath at Carnegie Hall (starring Jane Fonda, Nathan Gunn and Victoria Clark), Gordon’s A Coffin In Egypt (starring Frederica von Stade) for Lincoln Center’s American Songbook, and recordings of Kurt Weill’s Knickerbocker Holiday (Ghostlight/Sh-k-boom Records) and The Road of Promise (Naxos Records). A leading non-profit administrator, Edward has served as Executive Director of Gotham Chamber Opera, Producing Director of MasterVoices, and Managing Director of American Lyric Theater. He additionally leads sold-out seminars on musical theater, rock-n-roll, jazz and other popular music at RoundTable Cultural Seminars in New York, and is a frequent public speaker at many corporate and private events. edwbarnes.com

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Sarah Pulliam Bailey

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To receive emails about future productions, please email preludeoperacompany@gmail.com



This show is dedicated to Donetta Riley, artist, music teacher, art teacher, and makeup artist for Prelude Opera. I know you would have loved this show, and I’m so sad you couldn’t be here. We miss you.





HOWARD GILMAN
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THE BONNEFONT



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