



Verdi Requiem

April 23 | 7:30 PM

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Classics Series

Verdi Requiem

April 23, 2026 | 7:30 PM
Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Auditorium

Ilya Ram | *conductor*
Tiffany Townsend | *soprano*
Ashley Dixon | *mezzo-soprano*
Cameron Schutza | *tenor*
Jason Zacher | *bass*
CSO Chorus | *Darrin Hassevoort, director*
Southern Adventist University Choir | *Rina Ritivoiu, director*
UTC Chamber Singers | *Kevin Ford, director*

Flash photography and video/audio recording of this concert are strictly prohibited.

Giuseppe Verdi
(1813 - 1901)

Messa da Requiem (1h 30m)
Presented with supertitles.
There will be no intermission.

This evening's performance is dedicated to the memory of Bob Roza.

Special thanks to the UTC Music Division.

A recording of this performance will be broadcast on Classical 90.5 WSMC on Sunday, May 24, 2026 at 4 PM.



This performance is funded in part by:

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| Program Notes

Messa da Requiem

Giuseppe Verdi

Messa da Requiem

Giuseppe Verdi

(b. October 10, 1813 in Le Roncole, Italy; d. January 27, 1901 in Milan)

An Opera in Disguise?

When *Messa da Requiem* premiered, the conductor Hans von Bülow famously dismissed it as "Verdi's latest opera, in ecclesiastical robes." He wasn't entirely wrong. Verdi, the titan of 19th-century Italian opera, brought the same visceral human drama to the altar that he brought to the stage. It is a work that first shakes the living to the core with the certainty of death, the ultimate unknown awaiting everyone. It is a message delivered with terrifying intensity before tender lyrical beauty offers a consolation that something worthy will be found on this side of the grave, but without comforting visions of heaven for the faithful. Rarely is *Messa da Requiem* performed in a liturgical context nowadays. Concert performances like the one tonight are the norm as with Mozart's *Requiem*.

The Agnostic's Prayer

Verdi was an unlikely candidate to pen a religious masterpiece. By the time he wrote *Requiem*, he was a wealthy celebrity of unified Italy, but inside was a man scarred by early tragedy. Decades prior, within a span of two years, his young wife and both his infant children died. This trauma provided a wellspring of grief for his art but eroded his religious conviction. His second wife, Giuseppina, described him as "a very doubtful believer." Consequently, his *Requiem* is agnostic in nature—it focuses less on the liturgical promise of salvation and more on the terrifying, human fear of the unknown.

The Rossini Failure

The work's origins are both political and personal. When Gioachino Rossini died in 1868, Verdi proposed a collaboration: the top composers of Italy would each write one movement of a requiem to honor him. Verdi was assigned the finale, the *Libera me*. While the music was completed, squabbles over the premiere caused the project to be tabled and forgotten. (But not forever. The Rossini Requiem premiered in Stuttgart in 1988 after moldering for more than a century.)

The Manzoni Catalyst

Verdi understood the worth of his own music and refused to let his contribution go to waste. The catalyst to finish the work himself came through his idol, Alessandro Manzoni, the iconic poet and novelist who served as the literary father of Italian unification.

When Manzoni died in 1873, Verdi proposed writing a full requiem in Manzoni's honor, retrieving his abandoned *Libera me* and composing the rest of the mass around it. He conducted the premiere in Milan on the first anniversary of Manzoni's death, May 22, 1874.

The Mass, Movement by Movement

The mass is written in seven sections, structured to wring every drop of emotion from the ancient text.

- I. Requiem & Kyrie: opens as a whispered plea for eternal rest (*Requiem aeternam*). The orchestra and chorus seem reluctant to rise above a murmur until the soloists enter, pleading for the Lord and Christ to have mercy (*Kyrie eleison / Christe eleison*). The music becomes passionate and operatic, as though no mercy is possible without the deepest emotions being wrung from the soul, before the orchestra finishes with whispered chords.

- II. Dies irae (Day of wrath): a massive undertaking, it begins with a ferocious, apocalyptic depiction of the day the world dissolves into ashes. It quickly subsides into the *Tuba mirum*, introduced by fanfares on-stage and off-stage, as the trumpet scatters a wondrous sound to gather all before the throne. Death stands amazed (*Mors stupebit*) in a stark bass solo, followed by the *Liber scriptus* (A written book) which intersperses the wrathful opening theme. A lament from the soloists wondering what a wretch should say (*Quid sum miser*) gives way to the stormy declaration to the King of awe-inspiring majesty (*Rex tremendae majestatis*).

We are still only halfway through this sprawling sequence. The emotional core arrives with Recordare, *Jesu pie* (Remember, merciful Jesus). Verdi composed the soprano and mezzo-soprano roles to show off Teresa Stoltz and Maria Waldmann—the renowned stars of the European premiere of *Aida* only two years earlier. The solos demand the dramatic fire of *Aida* and the rich depth of Amneris wrapped into one, and their entrancing duet here is a stunning reunion of those two iconic voices. The tenor

then offers a confessional groan for mercy in *Ingemisco* (I groan), and the bass sings a reflective hope to be called with the blessed in *Confutatis maledictis* (When the accursed have been confounded). An abrupt reprise of the opening wrath gives way to the tearful finality of *Lacrymosa dies illa* (Mournful that day), concluding with a prayerful *Pie Jesu Domine* (Merciful Lord Jesus).

- III. Offertorio: A lyrical song of praise for the soloists beginning with *Domine, Jesu Christe* (Lord Jesus Christ), asking to deliver the souls of the faithful departed, and continuing with *Hostias* (Sacrifices), offered for their ultimate passage from death to life.

- IV. Sanctus: Written for two choruses in elaborate fugal counterpoint, the *Sanctus* (Holy, holy, holy) goes like the wind right through the *Hosanna* and *Benedictus* (Blessed is he who comes) sections where other composers would traditionally tarry.

- V. Agnus Dei: The soprano, mezzo, and chorus pray, Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*), grant everlasting rest. It proceeds placidly and without pretense to a deeply restful close.

- VI. Lux aeterna: A prayer from the mezzo, tenor, and bass asking a merciful God that everlasting light (*Lux aeterna*) may shine upon them. A creep of operatic urgency shadows the music, preparing the listener for the stunning finale.

- VII. Libera me: The soprano begins with a frightened, plainchant-style plea: *Libera me* (Deliver me from eternal death). As if needing to unwind before winding up, Verdi flashes back to the terrifying *Dies irae* a last time, followed by a delicate, *a cappella* reprise of the opening *Requiem aeternam*. The frightened plea returns, and the chorus answers with an aggressive fugue. The clamor is deafening, but as any human endeavor is merely the blink of an eye in eternity, it eventually dies down to a whimpering sigh, and only silence remains.

Verdi Meets Manzoni

Verdi had revered Manzoni all his adult life, believing the writer's masterpiece, *The Betrothed* (*I Promessi Sposi*), was not just a novel but "a consolation for humanity."

Despite this lifelong veneration, the two men did not actually meet until June 30, 1868, when Verdi's longtime friend, Countess Clara Maffei, finally arranged an introduction in Milan. Verdi was completely awestruck by the octogenarian writer. Shortly after the encounter, he wrote to Maffei, struggling to articulate his emotions: "What can I tell you of Manzoni? How [to] express the new, inexplicable, happy feeling which the sacred presence of this man aroused in me? I would have gone down on my knees before him if we were allowed to worship men."

Manzoni died May 22, 1873. Verdi, overcome by the loss of his hero, avoided the massive state funeral and, instead, traveled to Milan a week later to visit the grave alone.

Requiem Text

Verdi's Liturgical Deviations

Verdi's setting of the mass is notoriously theatrical, and while he largely adhered to the prescribed Roman Catholic text, he approached it with the eye of a dramatist rather than a priest. He deviated from the standard liturgy in two ways.

First, he appended the *Libera me* (Deliver me) to the end of the mass. In Catholic tradition, this text is not part of the Requiem Mass proper; it is part of the Absolution liturgy, which is typically chanted over the coffin *after* the mass has concluded and before burial. By incorporating it as his monumental seventh movement, Verdi transforms the structure into a terrifying, highly personal climax where the soprano must face her own mortality.

Second, Verdi frequently ignored strict liturgical boundaries to repeat text whenever it suited his emotional arc. Most famously, he reprises the terrifying *Dies irae* theme twice within the sequence itself, interrupting the soloists to remind the listener of the impending apocalypse. Shockingly, he brings it back yet again in the *Libera me*. He also reprises the opening *Requiem aeternam* during the finale, wrapping the whole work in a cyclical musical structure that prioritizes human drama over ecclesiastical rules.

Text with Translation

I: Requiem & Kyrie

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, / *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,*
and may perpetual light shine on them. / *et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Thou, O God, art praised in Sion, / *Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,*
and to thee shall a vow be paid in Jerusalem. / *et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem;*

Hear my prayer; / *exaudi orationem meam,*
to thee shall all flesh come. / *ad te omnis caro veniet.*

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, / *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,*
and may perpetual light shine on them. / *et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Lord, have mercy. / *Kyrie eleison.*

Christ, have mercy. / *Christe eleison.*

Lord, have mercy. / *Kyrie eleison.*

II: Dies Irae

Day of wrath, that day / *Dies irae, dies illa*
shall dissolve the world in ashes, / *solvet saeculum in favilla,*
as David and the Sibyl testify. / *teste David cum Sibylla.*

What trembling there shall be, / *Quantus tremor est futurus,*
when the Judge shall come / *quando judex est venturus,*
to examine all things strictly! / *cuncta stricte discussurus!*

The trumpet, scattering a wondrous sound / *Tuba mirum spargens sonum*
through the tombs of every land, / *per sepulcra regionum,*

shall gather all before the throne. / *coget omnes ante thronum.*
Death and nature shall stand amazed, / *Mors stupebit et natura,*
when creation rises again / *cum resurget creatura,*
to answer to the Judge. / *judicanti responsura.*
A written book will be brought forth, / *Liber scriptus proferetur,*
in which all is contained, / *in quo totum continetur,*
from which the world shall be judged. / *unde mundus judicetur.*
When therefore the Judge takes his seat, / *Judex ergo cum sedebit,*
whatever is hidden will reveal itself, / *quidquid latet apparebit,*
nothing will remain unavenged. / *nil inultum remanebit.*
What then shall I say, wretch that I am? / *Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?*
What advocate shall I entreat to speak for me, / *Quem patronum rogaturus,*
when even the righteous may hardly be secure? / *cum vix justus sit securus?*
King of awe-inspiring majesty, / *Rex tremendae majestatis,*
who freely savest the redeemed, / *qui salvandos salvas gratis,*
save me, O fount of mercy. / *salve me, fons pietatis.*
Remember, merciful Jesus, / *Recordare, Jesu pie,*
that I am the cause of thy journey; / *quod sum causa tuae viae;*
do not forsake me on that day. / *ne me perdas illa die.*
Seeking me, thou didst sit down weary; / *Quaerens me sedisti lassus;*
thou didst redeem me, suffering the cross; / *redemisti crucem passus;*
let not such toil be in vain. / *tantus labor non sit cassus.*
Just and avenging Judge, / *Juste judex ultionis,*
grant the gift of remission / *donum fac remissionis*
before the day of reckoning. / *ante diem rationis.*
I groan like one who is guilty; / *Ingemisco, tamquam reus;*
guilt reddens my face; / *culpa rubet vultus meus;*
spare a suppliant, O God. / *supplici parce, Deus.*
Thou who didst absolve Mary Magdalene, / *Qui Mariam absolvisti,*
and didst hearken to the thief, / *et latronem exaudisti,*
to me also hast thou given hope. / *mihi quoque spem dedisti.*
My prayers are not worthy, / *Preces meae non sunt dignae,*
but thou in thy merciful goodness / *sed tu bonus fac benigne,*
grant that I burn not in everlasting fire. / *ne perenni cremer igne.*
Place me among thy sheep, / *Inter oves locum praesta,*
and separate me from the goats, / *et ab haedis me sequestra,*
setting me on thy right hand. / *statuens in parte dextra.*
When the accursed have been confounded, / *Confutatis maledictis,*
and given over to the bitter flames, / *flammis acribus addictis,*
call me with the blessed. / *voca me cum benedictis.*
I pray in supplication on my knees, / *Oro supplex et acclinis,*
my heart contrite as the dust; / *cor contritum quasi cinis,*
safeguard my end. / *gere curam mei finis.*
Mournful that day, / *Lacrimosa dies illa,*
when from the dust shall rise / *qua resurget ex favilla*
the guilty man to be judged. / *judicandus homo reus.*

Therefore spare him, O God. / *Huic ergo parce, Deus.*
Merciful Lord Jesus, / *Pie Jesu Domine,*
grant them rest. Amen. / *dona eis requiem. Amen.*

III: Offertorio

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, / *Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,*
deliver the souls of all the faithful departed / *libera animas omnium fidelium*
defunctorum
from the pains of hell and from the bottomless pit. / *de poenis inferni et de profundo*
lacu.

Deliver them from the lion's mouth, / *Libera eas de ore leonis,*
lest hell swallow them up, / *ne absorbeat eas tartarus,*
lest they fall into darkness: / *ne cadant in obscurum:*
but let the holy standard-bearer Michael / *sed signifer sanctus Michae*
bring them into the holy light, / *repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam,*
which thou once promised to Abraham and his descendants. / *quam olim Abrahae*
promisisti et semini ejus.

Sacrifices and prayers of praise, O Lord, we offer to thee. / *Hostias et preces tibi,*
Domine, laudis offerimus.

Receive them for those souls / *Tu suscipe pro animabus illis,*
whose memory we recall this day; / *quarum hodie memoriam facimus;*
grant them, O Lord, to pass from death to life, / *fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad*
vitam,
which thou once promised to Abraham and his descendants. / *quam olim Abrahae*
promisisti et semini ejus.

IV: Sanctus

Holy, holy, holy, / *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,*
Lord God of Hosts. / *Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. / *Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.*
Hosanna in the highest. / *Hosanna in excelsis.*

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. / *Benedictus qui venit in nomine*
Domini.

Hosanna in the highest. / *Hosanna in excelsis.*

V: Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, / *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata*
mundi,
grant them rest. / *dona eis requiem.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, / *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata*
mundi,
grant them rest. / *dona eis requiem.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, / *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata*
mundi,
grant them eternal rest. / *dona eis requiem sempiternam.*

VI: Lux Aeterna

May everlasting light shine upon them, O Lord, / *Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,*
with thy saints forever, / *cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,*
for thou art merciful. / *quia pius es.*

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, / *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,*
and may perpetual light shine upon them, / *et lux perpetua luceat eis,*
with thy saints forever, / *cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,*
for thou art merciful. / *quia pius es.*

VII: Libera Me

Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that awful day, / *Libera me, Domine, de*
morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda,
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved: / *quando coeli movendi sunt et terra:*
when thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. / *dum veneris judicare saeculum per*
ignem.

I am seized with trembling and I fear, / *Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo,*
until the judgment and the wrath to come. / *dum discussio venerit, atque ventura ira.*
When the heavens and the earth shall be moved. / *Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.*
That day is one of wrath, of calamity and of misery, / *Dies irae, dies illa, calamitatis et*
miseriae,
a great day, and exceeding bitter. / *dies magna et amara valde.*

When thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. / *Dum veneris judicare saeculum per*
ignem.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, / *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,*
and may perpetual light shine upon them. / *et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that awful day, / *Libera me, Domine, de*
morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda,
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved: / *quando coeli movendi sunt et terra:*
when thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. / *dum veneris judicare saeculum per*
ignem.

Deliver me, O Lord, deliver me. / *Libera me, Domine, libera me.*

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| Text/Libretto

Messa da Requiem

Giuseppe Verdi

I. Requiem and Kyrie

Chorus:

*Grant them eternal rest, O Lord;
and may perpetual light shine upon them.
A hymn in Zion befits you, O God,
and a debt will be paid to you in Jerusalem.*

Hear my prayer:

all earthly flesh will come to you.

Quartet and Chorus:

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

II. Sequence

Chorus:

*The day of wrath, that day will
dissolve the world in ashes,
as David and the Sibyl prophesied.*

*How great will be the terror,
when the Judge comes
who will smash everything completely!*

*The trumpet, scattering a marvelous sound
through the tombs of every land,
will gather all before the throne.*

Bass:

*Death and Nature shall stand amazed,
when all Creation rises again
to answer to the Judge.*

Mezzo-soprano and Chorus:

*A written book will be brought forth,
which contains everything
for which the world will be judged.*

*Therefore when the Judge takes His seat,
whatever is hidden will be revealed:
nothing shall remain unavenged.*

*The day of wrath, that day will
dissolve the world in ashes,
as David and the Sibyl prophesied.*

Soprano, Mezzo-soprano and Tenor:

What can a wretch like me say?

*Whom shall I ask to intercede for me,
when even the just ones are unsafe?*

Solo Quartet and Chorus:

King of dreadful majesty.

*who freely saves the redeemed ones,
save me, O font of pity.*

Soprano and Mezzo-soprano:

*Recall, merciful Jesus,
that I was the reason for your journey:
do not destroy me on that day.
In seeking me, you sat down wearily;
enduring the Cross, you redeemed me:
do not let these pains to have been in vain.*

*Just Judge of punishment:
give me the gift of redemption
before the day of reckoning.*

Tenor:

*I groan as a guilty one,
and my face blushes with guilt;
spare the suppliant, O God.
You, who absolved Mary Magdalen,
and heard the prayer of the thief,
have given me hope, as well.*

*My prayers are not worthy,
but show mercy, O benevolent one,
lest I burn forever in fire.*

*Give me a place among the sheep,
and separate me from the goats,
placing me on your right hand.*

Bass and Chorus:

*When the damned are silenced,
and given to the fierce flames,
call me with the blessed ones.*

*I pray, suppliant and kneeling,
with a heart contrite as ashes:
take my ending into your care.*

Chorus:

*The day of wrath,
that day will dissolve the world in ashes,
as David and the Sibyl prophesied.*

Solo Quartet and Chorus:

*That day is one of weeping,
on which shall rise from the ashes
the guilty man, to be judged.*

Therefore, spare this one, O God.

Merciful Lord Jesus:

grant them peace.

Amen.

III. Offertorio

Quartet:

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory:

*deliver the souls of all the faithful
dead from the pains of hell and from the
deep pit; deliver them from the mouth of the lion;
that hell may not swallow them, and
that they may not fall into darkness.
But may the holy standard-bearer Michael
show them the holy light;
which you once promised to Abraham and his descendents.
We offer to you, O Lord, sacrifices and prayers.
Receive them on behalf of those souls whom we
commemorate today.
Grant, O Lord, that they might pass from death into that life
which you once promised to Abraham and his descendents. Deliver the souls of all the
faithful dead from the
pains of hell;
Grant that they might pass from death into that life.*

IV. Sanctus

Double Chorus:

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.
Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!*

V. Agnus Dei

Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, and Chorus:

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
grant them rest everlasting.*

VI. Lux aeterna

Mezzo-soprano, Tenor and Bass:

*Let eternal light shine upon them, O Lord,
with your saints forever; for you are merciful.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them
with your saints forever; for you are merciful.*

VII. Libera me

Soprano and Chorus:

*Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that awful day,
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved:
when you will come to judge the world by fire.
I tremble, and I fear the judgment and the wrath to come, when the heavens and the
earth
shall be moved.
The day of wrath, that day of calamity and misery; a great and bitter day, indeed.*

*Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine upon them.
Deliver me, Lord, from eternal death on that awful day.
Deliver me, O Lord, when the heavens and the earth shall be moved;
when you will come to judge the world by fire.
Deliver me, Lord, from eternal death on that awful day.
Deliver me.*

| Artist Biographies



Ilya Ram

Kayoko Dan Fund Music Director

“Although Ram [...] presents himself as deliberately casual in his shiny silver sneakers, his conducting is the opposite: energetic, spontaneous, yet clear, precise, and attentive to detail.” - Leipziger

Volkszeitung

Israeli-American conductor Ilya Ram, praised for his “charismatic and energetic performances” (Crescendo Magazine) and “expressive spontaneity” (Diapason), is internationally recognized for his creative and engaging approach to classical music.

A prizewinner of the 5th Evgeny Svetlanov Competition in Monte Carlo, Ram is the Music Director of the Chattanooga Symphony & Opera, where he has launched an ambitious three-year artistic arc that explores Reflection, Moments, and Destiny - a journey connecting the past, present, and future of orchestral storytelling. His tenure is marked by innovative programming, cross-genre collaborations, and partnerships with local artists and community organizations that expand the orchestra’s cultural reach.

Recent and upcoming highlights include performances with the Szczecin Filharmonia, Orquestra do Algarve, Orchestra Indiana, Deutsche Philharmonie Merck, Magdeburg Philharmoniker, Ensemble Tempus Konnex, Elbland Philharmonie Sachsen, Israel Chamber Orchestra, Ra’anana Sinfonietta, and the Robert-Schumann Philharmonic. He returns for the third time to the IMPULS Festival for Contemporary Music. Among the many soloists he has collaborated with are Pekka Kuusisto, Krist?ne Balanas, Amandine Savary, Ilian Garnetz, Ildikó Szabó, Liv Redpath, Ying Li, and Charlotte Thiele.

Equally at home in the pit and on the concert stage, Ram made his Semperoper Dresden debut with the world premiere of Zad Moulitka’s *Drei Miese, fiese Kerle* and previously served as Guest Resident Conductor at Theater Chemnitz, leading productions including Zimmermann’s *Weißer Rose* and Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake*. As a

scholarship holder of the Akademie Musiktheater Heute (Deutsche Bank Stiftung), he premiered three new operas with Ensemble Modern during the 2024/25 season.

A strong believer that the highest artistic results are achieved through joy, curiosity, and creative rehearsal strategies, Ram has worked extensively with young ensembles, including the German National Youth Ballet, Youth North German Philharmonic, and the Dresden Special Music High School.

Committed to artistic innovation, Ram is among the few conductors to have completed the Music.Multimedia.Management project led by the Szczecin Philharmonic in collaboration with Fjord Cadenza Festival and TRAFÖ Center for Contemporary Art. He has participated in numerous international masterclasses, including the first-ever conducting masterclass at the Bayreuth Festival, and has studied with Christian Thielemann, Klaus Mäkelä, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo, Neeme Järvi, Marek Janowski, Hartmut Haenchen, Robert Treviño, Steven Sloane, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Timothy Redmond, Nicolás Pasquet, Johannes Schlaefli, and Jorma Panula.

Ram graduated cum laude from the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in Tel Aviv and earned his master's degree in orchestral conducting from the Hochschule für Musik "Carl Maria von Weber" Dresden, later completing the Advanced Professional Training for Conductors at the UdK Berlin. His studies were supported by scholarships from the Yotzrim Foundation, America-Israel Cultural Foundation, and the DAAD.

Before beginning his formal studies, Ram volunteered for a year in underprivileged communities in Israel, working with children both in and outside the education system. He later continued his social engagement through the Israeli branch of Physicians for Human Rights.

(October 2025)



Tiffany Townsend

soprano

Tiffany Townsend has been praised for her "powerhouse soprano and expressive presence" (*The Wall Street Journal*) and "rich voice and interpretive talent" (*Bachtrack*). She was designated as a

Resident Artist at Seattle Opera for the 2024-2025 season, where she makes her role debut as America Robinson in *Jubilee* and will cover the title role of *Tosca*. Ms. Townsend is the recipient of the prestigious 2021 Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation. She has previously performed roles with Los Angeles Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and Wolf Trap Opera. In concert, she has performed with New Jersey Symphony, Bakersfield Symphony, Artosphere Festival, Missouri Symphony, Tacoma Symphony and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

A native of Jackson, Mississippi, Townsend holds a Professional Studies Certificate in Opera from Curtis Institute of Music, a Master of Music from The Juilliard School, and a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Millsaps College.



Ashley Dixon

mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Ashley Dixon is a bright shining star on today's opera and concert stages. This season she performs *Les Nuits d'été* of Hector Berlioz with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Matthew Kraemer and joins the roster of Lyric Opera of Kansas City to cover Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with a team that includes conductor James Lowe and stage director Morris Panych. Ms. Dixon will also conduct a masterclass at the University of Indiana. Last season she performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as The Queen in Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* with James Conlon on the podium; returned to the San Francisco opera to sing Zweite Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* in the inventive production from Barrie Kosky and Suzanne Andrade with Music Director Eun Sun Kim on the podium; joined Houston Grand Opera to cover the role of Elizabeth Van Lew in the world premiere of *Intelligence*, a new work from composer Jake Heggie and librettist Gene Scheer, conducted by Kwamé Ryan; and sang the demanding role of Adalgisa in Bellini's bel canto masterpiece *Norma* with Palm Beach Opera led by conductor Carlo Montanaro and director Keturah Stickann as well as with the Boston Youth Symphony conducted by Federico Cortese and Joshua Major on stage direction. Her concert appearances included the Elgar's *Sea Pictures* with the Coastal Symphony of Georgia led by Music Director Michelle Merrill on the podium; Mozart's *Requiem* with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic conducted by Andrew Constantine; and joining a gala celebration with New Orleans Opera as a guest for *Lisette Oropesa in Concert* conducted by Joseph Colaneri.

Recent engagements include her critically acclaimed debuts with LA Opera in *Roberto Devereux* (Sara) under the baton of Eun Sun Kim and alongside bel canto veterans Ramon Vargas and Angela Meade as well as Amarillo Opera in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Rosina). On the concert stage she made debuts with Erie Philharmonic in Mozart's *Requiem* and Boston Philharmonic for performances of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* at Symphony Hall in Boston and Carnegie Hall, and returned to the Ravinia Festival for Beethoven *Symphony No. 9* and *Die Zauberflöte* (Zweite Dame); debuts at Opera Louisiane in the title role of Bolcom's *Lucrezia*, Hawaii Opera Theatre in *The Tragedy of Carmen* (Carmen), Festival Opera in *Norma* (Adalgisa), and Tel Aviv Summer Opera in *Carmen* (title role); and a return to the Ravinia Festival for *La clemenza di Tito* (Annio) conducted by James Conlon and San Francisco Opera for a Schwabacher Debut Recital. She also embarked on a duet recital tour with her husband tenor Carlos Santelli. Ms. Dixon has made formidable debuts with Detroit Opera (née Michigan Opera Theatre) in Copland's *The Tender Land* (Mrs. Splinters); Ravinia Festival in Ravel's *Shéhérazade*. ; Des Moines Metro Opera in *La Traviata* (Flora); and workshopping Laura Kaminsky's *Hometown to the World: Postville* (Linda Larsen) in addition to participating in San Francisco Opera's "Opera for all Voices."

Ms. Dixon made her San Francisco Opera main stage debut in the world premiere of Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* (Angel First Class). During her two-year tenure as an Adler Fellow, she was seen in *Carmen* (Mércèdes), *Rusalka* (Third Wood Sprite),

Manon Lescaut (Italian Singer), and *Hansel and Gretel* (Sandman). As a two-year participant in the Merola Opera Program, she was seen in *Gianni Schicchi* (La Ciesca), Menotti's *The Medium* (Mrs. Nolan), Walton's *The Bear* (Popova), and ended her summer season on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House, singing an aria from *Cendrillon* as part of the Merola Grand Finale concert.

Ms. Dixon continued to perform amid the pandemic joining The Atlanta Opera for her house and role debut as *Carmen*; was also a soloist in San Francisco Opera's Holiday Gala alongside Michael Fabiano and Sondra Radvanovsky; and appeared as a featured guest artist with Opera San José as well as joining West Edge Opera for *Elizabeth Cree* (Doris). Ms. Dixon has cultivated a passion for French repertoire ranging from Baroque to Berlioz, with roles including Gluck's *Orphée*, *Cendrillon*, *Marguerite (La damnation de Faust)*, and *Carmen*. Additional roles in her formidable arsenal include the title roles of *Ariodante*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Angelina (La Cenerentola)*. Conductors with whom she has collaborated with include Marin Alsop, Patrick Summers, David Neely, Benjamin Zander, Jorge Parodi, Christopher Ocasek, Christopher Franklin, Clinton Smith, Robert Mollicone, Michael Ching, Bryan Nies, and Emily Senturia, in productions and stage appearances working with stage directors James Robinson, Tomer Zvulun, Fenlon Lamb, Mark Foehringer, and Karen Tiller,

Ms. Dixon earned her Bachelor of Music at the Louisiana State University and Master of Music at the University of Michigan, where she was seen in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* (title role) and Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* (Sister Helen Prejean). Ms. Dixon is a Grand Finals Winner of The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.



Cameron Schutzta

tenor

Praised by Opera Magazine for his "clarity of tone, ringing high notes and clear German diction," tenor Cameron Schutzta is in demand for his "expressive spinto voice" (Opera Warhorses) in concert and opera appearances worldwide.

Mr. Schutzta's 2025-26 season begins with a return to Lyric Opera of Chicago for a cover assignment of Canio in *Pagliacci*, after last season's *Fidelio* (covering Florestan in *Fidelio*). The 2024-25 season also included a cover assignment with The Metropolitan Opera as 4th Jew in *Salome*. His 2022-23 season included Tristan and Siegmund in excerpts from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Walküre* with the Walla Walla Symphony. During the 2023-2024 season, the artist returned to Tristan with the Harvard-Ratcliffe Orchestra in a concert performance of Act Two of *Tristan und Isolde*. Other recent role debuts include Erik in Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* with Opera Maine, Radames in Verdi's *Aida* with Portland Summerfest, and Calaf in *Turandot* with Ozark Lyric Opera. On the concert stage, the artist has also performed as tenor soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Austin, Fairfax and Alabama

symphonies.

In 2020, Mr. Schutza was awarded Second Prize and Orchestra's Choice awards at the Lauritz Melchior International Singing Competition (LMISC) in Aalborg, Denmark. He performed Pinkerton in Baltimore Concert Opera's *Madama Butterfly*, after which the Maryland Theatre Guide stated, "Cameron Schutza as B. F. Pinkerton navigates the demanding role with professional aplomb. In his opening arias, he quickly establishes himself as a quintessential tenor, able to control the signature high notes of the role with color and nuance...he was outstanding." Mr. Schutza was much lauded as Chairman Mao in the Princeton Festival's production of Adams' *Nixon in China*, with Bachtrack reporting, "Cameron Schutza is the Heldentenor Adams imagined for Chairman Mao, a big voice with a ringing top," and Parterre Box admiring the tenor's "freaky tessitura" and "unearthly beauty."

Mr. Schutza joined The Metropolitan Opera's roster for its productions of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Salome*. His other credits include *Fidelio* with Michigan Opera Theatre and, on the concert stage, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony at Carnegie Hall, Verdi's *Requiem* with Houston Masterworks, and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

Schutza has sung in recital with Rockport Music in a program celebrating 150 years of Strauss with soprano Elizabeth Blancke-Biggs and performed concert arias with the New Jersey Festival Orchestra. The Texas native is an alumnus of the young artist programs of Santa Fe Opera, Arizona Opera and Palm Beach Opera. A 2016 recipient of the top prize Robert Lauch Memorial Fund Endowment Award from the Wagner Society of New York, Schutza has also been a two-time winner of the Arizona District of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and was awarded third place in the 2017 Lauritz Melchior International Singing Competition in Denmark for his interpretation of Wagner's heroic tenor leads with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra.



Jason Zacher

bass

Bass-baritone Jason Zacher is quickly gaining national attention as a rising new talent and versatile performer. Last season, Mr. Zacher joined the prestigious Glynn Studio Artist program at The Atlanta Opera, taking the stage in their productions of ***Frankenstein***, ***Rigoletto***, ***La bohème***, and ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***. He also returned to Carnegie Hall with MidAmerica Productions in Haydn's ***Lord Nelson Mass*** and to The Glimmerglass Festival, where he took on the role of Uncle/Witness #9 in Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell's modern masterpiece ***Elizabeth Cree*** and covered both Pirate King and Sergeant of Police in Gilbert & Sullivan's ***The Pirates of Penzance***. Mr. Zacher also advanced to the finals of the prestigious Lotte Lenya Competition, where he received the second-place prize. This season he returns to The Atlanta Opera studio for their productions of ***La bohème***, ***The Magic Flute***, ***Macbeth***, ***Siegfried***, and ***Semele***. He

also joins South Florida Symphony to sing Pangloss in ***Candide***, Worcester Chorus for ***Messiah***, Montclair State University for Beethoven's ***Symphony No. 9***, and Tulsa Opera for a gala concert.

Mr. Zacher is a former member of the acclaimed Sandford Studio Artist Program at Kentucky Opera, where he impressed audiences with his roles as Colline in ***La bohème***, Alidoro in ***La Cenerentola***, and Henry in ***The Gift of the Magi***. Following his time in Kentucky, he was highlighted as part of the Young Artist Program at The Glimmerglass Festival, most notably performing the role of Argante in ***Rinaldo*** and covering Pangloss/Voltaire in ***Candide***. Mr. Zacher was also featured as a soloist in concert alongside award-winning singer-songwriter Natalie Merchant and Anthony Roth Costanzo. He spent several summers with Des Moines Metro Opera, most recently singing the role of Jimmy in the Midwest premiere of ***American Apollo*** (Geter/Palmer), as well as covering both Bottom and Theseus in Britten's ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***.

Equally at home on the concert stage, Mr. Zacher was recently featured as the bass soloist in Mozart's ***Requiem*** alongside the Masterwork Chorus in the spring of 2023. He returned in December, making his Carnegie Hall début as the bass soloist in Handel's ***Messiah***. Other notable credits include bass soloist in Bach's ***Hercules at the Crossroads*** (BWV213), Mendelssohn's ***St. Paul***, Mozart's ***Coronation Mass***, Britten's ***Rejoice in the Lamb***, and Ralph Vaughan Williams' ***Songs of Travel***.

Also well regarded in the competition circuit, Mr. Zacher was named a New York District Winner for the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition (2023). He has received top accolades from various prestigious organizations, including the Kurt Weill Foundation, the Jensen Foundation, Annapolis Opera, James Toland Vocal Arts, Rochester Oratorio Society, Opera Birmingham, and National Opera Association, among others.

| Orchestra Musicians

Tonight's CSO Musicians

Violin 1

- *Joshua Holritz, Concermaster
- *Nicholas Naegele, Associate Concermaster
- *Calvin Lewis
- *David Katz
- *Jeanne Johnson
- *Nick Hoy
- Chris Thurstone

Annie Thurstone
Jonathan Urizar
J.P. Brien-Slack

Violin 2

*Sheri Peck, Principal
*Emily Drexler
*Rebecca James
*Lee Smith
Jessica Stansbury
Mariya Potapova
Hunter Wilburn
Sara Lee-Cho
Lauren Elledge
Carl Larson

Viola

*Metiney Suwanawongse, Principal
*Casie Runkle
*Cristina Micci-Barreca
*Susan Saliny
Michael Holub
Rene Reder
Michael Hill
Silvana Matthews
Jake Pietroniro

Cello

*Suzanne Sims
*Micah Donar
*Paul Vest
*Annie Camp
*Spencer Brewer
*Eric Reed

Double Bass

*Taylor Brown, Principal
*Dexter Bell
Given Graber
Julia Milrod
Eric Hanson

Flute

*Amelia Dicks, Principal
John L. and Norma B. Anderson Principal Flute Chair
Maria Castillo Rodriguez
Gözde Çakir-Ramsey

Oboe

*Jessica Smithorn, Principal

Norma and Olan Mills II Principal Oboe Chair

*Carey Shinbaum

Clarinet

Ashley Leigh

*Emily Bowland

Bassoon

*Eric Anderson, Principal

Ryan Yamashiro

Staci Spring

Andy Favorito

French Horn

*Gordon James, Principal

*Joseph Demko

Justin Stanley

Kathleen Ray

Trumpet

*Christian Pagnard, Principal

*Michael Brown

Charles Pagnard

Gilbert Villagrana

Chris Probst

Stephen Wadsack

Geoffrey Wood

Brandon Hall

Trombone

*Prentiss Hobbs, Principal

James Perez

*Evan Clifton

Tuba

*Neil Konouchi, Principal

Timpani

Keith Lloyd

Percussion

Nathan Shew

CSO Contract Musicians

Violin 1

Joshua Holritz, Concertmaster
Nicholas Naegele, Assistant Concertmaster
Nathan Banks
Jeanne Johnson
David Katz
Calvin Lewis
Jasper Sewell

Violin 2

Sheri Peck, Principal Second Violin
Mary Benno
Emily Drexler
Nick Hoy
Rebecca James
Rachael McFarlane
Lee Smith
Jennifer Whittle

Viola

Metiney Suwanawongse, Principal
Katelyn Hoag
Cristina Micci-Barreca
Casie Runkle
Susan Saliny
Gabriel Schlaffer

Cello

Eric Reed, Principal
Spencer Brewer
Annie Camp
Micah Donar
Suzanne Sims
Paul Vest

Double Bass

Taylor Brown, Principal
Dexter Bell
Jonathan McWilliams

Flute

Amelia Dicks, Principal
John L. and Norma B. Anderson Principal Flute Chair
Lisa Meyerhofer (Leave of Absence)

Oboe

Jessica Smithorn, Principal

Norma and Olan Mills II Principal Oboe Chair

Teresa Spilko

Carey Shinbaum, English Horn

Clarinet

Emily Bowland

Joseph Miller, Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Eric Anderson, Principal

Shelby Jones

G. Eddie McCrary, Contrabassoon

Horn

Gordon James, Principal

Angela DeBoer

Matthew Meadows

Joseph Demko

Mackenzie Newell

Trumpet

Christian Pagnard, Principal

Michael Brown

Trombone

Prentiss Hobbs, Principal

Kevin Dombrowski

Christopher Brown (Leave of Absence)

Evan Clifton

Tuba

Neil Konouchi, Principal

Timpani

Alex Wadner, Principal

Percussion

Matthew West, Principal

Harp

Caroline Brown Hudson, Principal

Keyboard

Alan Nichols, Principal

| Choir Rosters

CSO Chorus

Darrin Hassevoort, director

SOPRANO

Kinney Billingsley

Kathryn Calise

Nancy Collum

Gaye Dupre

Susan Haisley

Karen Hall

Melinda Hightower

Kami Horton

Ella Porter Ivey

Kirsten Lankford

Rosemary Lee

Nicole Lewin

Andrea Lyons

Tricia Magnuson

Betty Anne Neal

Mariana Perez

Trish Proctor

Lydia Reed

Julie Roberts

Anne Sauser

Charmie Scott

Margaret Starkie

Carly Tankersley

Kate Veltkamp

Cassandra Weller

Bonnie Wright-Woodward

ALTO

Marianna Allen

Bonnie Bryant

Annette Cooksey

Jamie Curtis

Kristen Davis

June Edmondson

Alison Ellis

Ruth Gonter

Rita Heckrotte

Melody Horne

Rebecca Levings

Caroline Long
Sara LoPiccolo
Ally Manno
Rachel Mercer
Elizabeth McSweet
Hallie Morgan
Jamie Newberg
Cecilia Piotter
Linn Robertson
Amy Robeson
Brianna Smith
Lena Van Horn
Karis Wnuk
Judy Zehnder

TENOR

Chris Asmussen
Tabitha Cox
Matthew Garrett
Tom Hammett
Tim Jeffers
Jim Magnuson
Daniel Perez
Paul Powers
Bob Sauser
Drew Tankersley
Mary Lynn Wilson
Steve Lewin
Bob McKenzie
Michael Myers
John Stone
George Taylor
John Van Winkle
Dale Walker
Alan Wells

BASS

Brady Arendale
Mike Benes
Thomas Brown
Dale Cadwallader
Evan Chesney
Bill Chimiak
Daniel Garner
Brent Harwell

Stephen Hawkins
Tom Horne
Tal Hurley
Bruce Owen

Southern Adventist University Choir

Rina Ritivoiu, director

SOPRANO

Nevaeh Blackman
Crista Chang
Rachel Charles
Janelle Clouse
Alessa Conrad
Aliyah Cox
Kiera Derequito
Tasharra Flemming
Jade Frias
Lucy Goss
Noemi Gutierrez
Nayeli Howard
Melea Hwang
Emma Iuliano
Claire Jorgensen
Shae Laffey
Lia Lopez
Alina Lytvynyuk
Ilianie Maurelus
Susanna McCurdy
Amara Mendoza
Monica Perez
Rosa Plasencia
Rebecca Savoy
Abby Snyder
Elijah Sprenkle
Allyson Stirewalt
Abby Tching
Clarissa Tching
Ashlyn Wilhelm
Chelsea Young

ALTO

Joella Alexander
Bianca Amaya
Giovanna Burgos
Luumuno Chileya
Jeanyvah Desarmes
Isabella Dixon
Amelia Duerksen
Adriana Esteves
Yesenia Germosen
Ximena Gonzalez
Hannah Jaeger
Carys Johnson
Raleigh Juba
Yasmeen Laurent
Lindsay Mattenson
Alison Menzmer
Valeria Moreno
Comfort Nnaemeka
Caryn Panjaitan
Brianna Pubien
Ana Sanchez
Aaliyah Scott
Claudia Tuionetoa
Nola Tuionetoa
Angela Villeda

TENOR

Emiliano Alvarez
Joel Borbon
Micah Bright
Paul Crowley
Evan Eslava
Kenji Nozaki
Nestor Perez
Quentin Quijada
Samuel Vargas

BASS

Lukas Castillo
Minjun Cha
Ben Cowden
Tanner Duffy
Braeden Hammonds
Gabriel Hernandez
Angel Hidalgo
Caleb Ishimwe
Simon Lee

Frank Lizardo
Joseph Manzanillo
Colton Pangkey
Nathan Pintos
Jared Ramos
Preston Sturges
Preston Carter
Roje Dotting
Josh Draget
Nestor Lizardo
Skyler Pangkey
Carter Smith
Michael Sunguro
Joseph Vargas

UTC Chamber Singers

Kevin Ford, director

SOPRANO

Abby Dallmann
Rose Drinkworth
Tess Eledge
Ryley Ford
Kaelyn Butler
Lydia McFall
Elena Rist
Silvia Rist

ALTO

Khaylan Bell
Maddie Boyd
Lisa Beth Coble
Lauren Graves
Ava Lathshaw
Alexis Moreland
Rachelle Pelote
Remington Prado-Bonner

TENOR

Noah Dillon
Owen Keeton
Max Parker
Aiden Payne
Eli Sledge

BASS

Bradley Bee

Ben Dewitt
Noah Dorris
Jack DuRoy
Kendan Hokenson
Ivy Smith

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