

# Welcome to the Opera

Fourteenth Season ~ 2013



Rimrock Opera is at a turning point. Looking back over its 14-year history, we proudly salute Artistic Director Douglas Nagel, whose excellent leadership and artistic vision have guided RO from a fledgling to a mature opera company. Tonight's *Aida*, his 23rd production, caps a proud legacy as Artistic Director and Producer that began in 2000 with *Madama Butterfly*.

Looking to the future, an opportunity has arisen from Venture Theatre's recent challenges whereby both Venture and Rimrock Opera can grow and secure their futures by merging. Established programs will continue, such as the Youth Conservatory and ROCK kids' chorus, Venture into Schools, trademark musicals and plays, main stage operas, Opera 101, and other opera-related activities. Out of this collaboration, a performing arts center will expand revenues by offering space for a wider spectrum of users. The center will become an important part of the community and facilitate lifelong learning in theater arts. A comprehensive business plan will allow donors to realize the benefit of integration. Both boards look forward to the exciting new partnership of two wonderful groups. You are invited to join us for the Grand Opening on May 11th.

Lucinda S. Butler, President



Since its inception in 2000, RO has been a big part of my career. While focusing on my current Assistant Professorship at MSU Billings, I recall all of the accomplishments RO and I have completed to date. There have been many tours into schools across Montana and Northern Wyoming with shows *The Cell Phone*, *Madama Butterfly*, *American Opera Idol*, and a huge success with *The Night Harry Stopped Smoking*. Over 20,000 young people experienced opera at their own schools. Under my tutelage, RO has produced four Summer Opera Festivals, the world premiere *Nosferatu*, plus twenty-three main stage productions including some of the most famous operas: *La bohème*, *La traviata*, *Madama Butterfly* and *The Barber of Seville*, to name some. RO had the vision to start a children's chorus, ROCK, that has been going strong since 2005. ROCK members are on stage in this production!

None of this would have been possible without the support of our sponsors and individual contributors. Every dollar that you have given has kept our programs alive. I cannot express how proud I am to have known all of you. Thank you for all of your support.

Douglas Nagel, Artistic Director

## In Memoriam



The late Henrietta V. "Hank" Johnstone was an integral member of Rimrock Opera Board of Directors since its 2001 inception. She was sole sponsor of the lavish costumes and sets for all main stage productions, providing donations comprising at least \$60,000 annually. Hank passed away in October, 2012.

Her legacy continues through her generous bequest to sustain Rimrock Opera. Personally, Hank was a kind soul whose gifts to RO gave her great satisfaction in bringing high quality opera to Billings. Thank you, Hank, for leading RO to stand proudly among America's opera companies!

## Our Mission

The mission of Rimrock Opera is to enhance the cultural life of this region by providing high quality opera productions and to make opera available to everyone through outreach presentations and educational programming.

### RIMROCK OPERA HISTORY

**1999 *The Barber of Seville***

Lloyd Mickelson, President

**2000 *Madama Butterfly***

Lloyd Mickelson, President

**2001 *The Merry Widow***

Elizabeth McNamer, President

**2002 *Tosca—Carmen***

Barbara Taylor, President

**2003 *The Magic Flute—Don Giovanni***

Bonnie Daniels, President

**2004 *Hansel & Gretel***

Bonnie Daniels, President

***Nosferatu*, World Premiere**

Lucinda Butler, President

**2005 *La bohème—La traviata***

Lucinda Butler, President

**2006 *Die Fledermaus***

***Madama Butterfly***

Lucinda Butler, President

**2007 *Così fan tutte***

***The Girl of the Golden West***

Lucinda Butler, President

**2008 *The Elixir of Love***

***The Marriage of Figaro***

Lucinda Butler, President

**2009 *Carmen—The Barber of Seville***

Lucinda Butler, President

**2010 *La bohème—The Merry Widow***

Lucinda Butler, President

**2011 *Tosca—Rigoletto***

Lucinda Butler, President

**2012 *The Crucible***

Lucinda Butler, President

**2013 *Aida***

Lucinda Butler, President

# The Rimrock Opera Company

Fourteenth Season—2013  
Douglas Nagel, Artistic Director,  
Presents

## Giuseppe Verdi

# AIDA

Libretto by Antonio Ghislanzoni. First performed December 24, 1871, in the Opera House, Cairo, Egypt  
Sung in Italian with English titles

### The Cast in order of vocal appearance

<b>Daren Small</b>	The King of Egypt, <i>bass</i>
<b>Michelle Berger</b>	Amneris, his daughter, <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
<b>Andrea Garritano*</b>	Aida, an Ethiopian girl, slave to Amneris, <i>soprano</i>
<b>Christopher Bengochea</b>	Radames, Egyptian captain of the guard, <i>tenor</i>
<b>Dennis Rupp</b>	Ramfis, a high priest of Isis, <i>bass</i>
<b>Robert Aaron Taylor</b>	Amonasro, King of Ethiopia and father of Aida, <i>baritone</i>
<b>Carolyn Coe field</b>	High Priestess, <i>soprano</i>
<b>Jason Webster*</b>	Messenger, <i>tenor</i>

Priests and priestesses, Egyptians, warriors, guards, slaves, prisoners:

**Karlee Adler, Gavin Askin\*, Elain Atkinson\*, Brock Boender, Grace Bondurant, Hannah Bondurant, \*Mike Bondurant, \*Ron Bray, Sam Brodston, \*Mikayla Burpee, \*Kathryn Clark, Kelly Deiling, \*Madyson Feuerstein, Jessica Garibay, Debra Gloor, \*Sarah Haffey, Ashley Hanser, Hunter Hash, \*Harley Heeffle, \*Monica Henke, \*Jared Hibbert, \*JaimeLynn Hotaling, \*MaryKate Hotaling, Nicole Jerominski, Jordan Jones, Meghan Kilroy, \*Lynn Laubach, \*Katy Levin, Jorian Lokken, \*Jessica Luhr, \*Siriana Lundgren, \*Kate Meyer, Erica Noble, Shaena Noble, \*Hailey Patterson, \*Tyler Petrusha, \*Marshall Pluhar, \*Treston Porter, Shawn Rasch, Kristi Rawlinson, \*Lance Reiland, \*Taryn Reitz, Ashley Reitz, Janie Rife, \*Shelby Rowse, \*Caitlin Schanz, \*Sydney Stevens, Karla Stricker, Daniel Struckman, Ben Swanson-Tomhave, \*Olivia Tyrrell, Jane Van Dyk, Kristen Van Luchene, \*Whitney Vralsted, \*Luke Walker, \*Jonathon Walters, Hannah Wambolt, \*Jason Webster, and \*Riley Wisler. Supernumeraries: \*Matthew Clark, \*Jeff Ewert, \*Troy Paisley**

**Terpsichore Dance Company, Ricki Feeley, Director**

Dancers: \*Paige Franklin, \*Carly Green, \*Tami Hunt, \*Olivia Jones, \*Alys Marshall, \*Krista Marshall, \*Allison McLean, \*Megan Mullowney, \*Maribel Schaff, \*Heather Webster Sather

Trumpeters from MSU Billings: \*Emily Prouty and \*Stephen Klippenstein

<b>Doug Nagel</b> , Producer and Chorus Master	<b>Janie Rife</b> , make-up assistant
<b>Barbara Day Turner</b> , Conductor	<b>Loretta Wittmer</b> , Costume Director
<b>Matthew Haney</b> , Stage Director	<b>Marie Thompson</b> , Costume Assistant
<b>Alex Heyneman</b> , Lighting Designer	<b>Randy Jordan</b> , ABT Technical Director
<b>Jan Halmes*</b> , Rehearsal Pianist and Ancillary Events Pianist	<b>Alberta Bair Theater Technical and Stage Crew</b>
<b>Sandi Rabas</b> , Chorus Rehearsal Pianist and Ancillary Events Pianist	<b>Stivanello Sets and Costumes</b> , Set Design and Rental
<b>Krista Marshall</b> , Choreographer	<b>Janie Westendorf, Curtains Up Costumes</b> , Costume Design and Construction
<b>Angie Langeliers</b> , ROCK Director	<b>Emma King</b> , Titles Projectionist
<b>Richelle Stricker</b> , Stage Manager	<b>Jeff Ewert, Troy Paisley</b> , Animal Handlers
<b>Dodie Rife</b> , Stage Co-Manager and Properties Manager	<b>Stivanello Costume Company</b> , Sets
<b>Babette Rife</b> , Properties and Stage Assistant	<b>Emma King</b> , Supertitle Operator
<b>Kristen Klimper</b> , Make-up and Wigs Director	<b>Randy Jordan</b> , Technical Director
	English text courtesy of Chadwick Productions
	* company debut

Performance duration is approximately 3 hours, with two 15 minute intermissions  
The use of cameras and recording equipment is prohibited. Please silence all phones and electronic devices.

**Saturday, April 27 at 7:30 PM**  
**Alberta Bair Theater - Billings, Montana**

# Synopsis

**Time: The dynasty of the Pharaohs**

**Place: Memphis and Thebes in ancient Egypt**

## **Act One**

In the royal palace at Memphis, Ramfis, the high priest, informs Radames, a young captain of the guard, that Ethiopia is posing a threat to the Nile Valley. Radames hopes that the goddess Isis will choose him to lead the Egyptian army, believing that a victory over the Ethiopians would enable him to free his secret love, Aïda, the Ethiopian slave of the king's daughter, Amneris. Amneris, who also loves Radames, enters and begins to question Radames, suspecting that he is in love with Aïda. A messenger announces that Amonasro is leading the Ethiopian army to march on Thebes. Radames is appointed leader of the Egyptian army, and he leads his men in a battle hymn. Amneris is echoed by her people as she cries, "Return Victorious!" Aïda is stunned to hear herself repeat these words, and contemplates her conflicted loyalties. Although her captors do not know it, she is the Princess of Ethiopia and her lover will soon be engaged in battle against her own father.

### *Fifteen Minute Intermission*

## **Act Two**

Radames is the victor in the battle. While awaiting his return, Amneris is groomed and entertained by her slaves. To determine if Aïda does indeed love Radames, Amneris tells her slave that he was slain in battle. Aïda's sorrowful response reveals her secret love. Amneris then discloses that Radames is really alive, but subsequently threatens Aïda. She is to keep her place as a slave and ignore her feelings for Radames. Aïda nearly confesses her royal identity, but instead, pleads for mercy. As Radames returns, a parade and dances celebrate the success of Egypt. Radames is crowned victor by Amneris and his captives are lead in; these include Aïda's father, Amonasro, disguised as an officer. He warns Aïda not to give away his royal identity, and proceeds to plead for mercy for the lives of his people. Ramfis and the priests suggest that the captives be killed, but Radames asks for the captives' freedom to be his reward. Ramfis suggests that all but Aïda's father be released. The King agrees and gives Radames the hand of Amneris as his reward for victory.

### *Fifteen Minute Intermission*

## **Act Three**

Ramfis leads Amneris to a temple of Isis on the bank of the Nile to receive a blessing on the eve of her wedding. Her face veiled, Aïda enters to wait in secrecy for Radames. She is immersed in nostalgic thoughts as she longs for her conquered homeland. Her thoughts are interrupted by the appearance of her father, who has learned of her love for Radames. He encourages her to betray Radames by tricking him into revealing the Egyptian army's invasion plan. She attempts to decline, but finally agrees as he scolds her loyalties and reminds her of what the Egyptians have done to her beloved homeland. Unaware of Amonasro's presence, Radames appears to Aïda, declaring that he will marry her after his next victory. She instead insists that they run away together to Ethiopia and asks which route they will take. Upon hearing the Egyptian plan, Amonasro shows himself and declares that he is actually the King of Ethiopia. Radames is horrified by his unwilling act of treason, while Aïda and Amonasro try to convince him that it was an act of fate. Amneris discovers them, declaring that Radames must be a traitor. Amonasro lunges at Amneris with a drawn dagger, but he is stopped by Radames. Radames unexpectedly urges Amonasro and Aïda to escape. He then places himself under arrest.

## **Act Four**

Radames is sent to the Temple of Judgment where Amneris offers him a chance to save himself. She will plead for him if he will forsake Aïda, yet he refuses, preferring death. Amneris listens as the priests ask him three times to defend himself. Radames refuses to answer and is condemned to death. Amneris, appalled at the consequences of her jealousy, declares that their need for revenge will kill an innocent man. Buried alive in a tomb beneath the temple, Radames thinks only of Aïda. Suddenly, she appears in the presumably sealed tomb, having slipped in earlier to share her lover's fate. Radames fails in a final, desperate attempt to remove the stone holding them in the chamber. Resigned to their fate, the lovers bid farewell to the earth. Radames faces death with Aïda. Appearing above the vault, Amneris mourns and prays. Δ

# *The Rimrock Opera Orchestra*

**Barbara Day Turner**, Conductor

**Richele Sitton**, Orchestra Manager

**Jack Webb**, Orchestra Technician

**Rocky Mountain College Department of Music**, Timpani

## **Violin I**

Mary LaMonaca,  
Concert Master  
Melyssa Ostler  
Julie Johnson  
Kristi Kazmierski

## **Cello**

Mary McCullough\*  
Lewis Rawlinson

## **Bassoon**

Paul Gates\*

## **Percussion**

Kyle Melugin\*

## **Horn**

John Dutton\*  
Gary Mermel

## **Harp (Keyboard)**

Jan Halmes

\* principal player

## **Violin II**

Laura Dalbey\*  
Cathy Pomeroy  
Diane Fossen  
Grace Lamdin

## **Flute**

Lynette Larson\*

## **Trumpet**

Mark Fenderson\*

## **Oboe**

Sue Logan\*

## **Trombone**

Dan Brockelbank\*

## **Viola**

Amy Letson\*  
Brian Bell

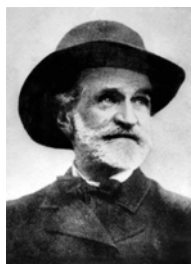
## **Clarinet**

Laurel Linde\*  
Jolane Jones

## **Timpani**

Rebekah Reger\*

## *About the Composer*



**Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi** (1813 – 1901) was an Italian Romantic composer, mainly of opera. He was one of the most influential composers of the 19th century. His works are frequently performed in opera houses throughout the world and, transcending the boundaries of the genre, some of his themes have long since taken root in popular culture – such as "La donna è mobile" from *Rigoletto*, "Va, pensiero" (The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves) from *Nabucco*, "Libiamo ne' lieti calici" (The Drinking Song) from *La traviata* and the "Grand March" from *Aida*. Verdi's masterworks dominate the standard repertoire a century and a half after their composition.

# Acknowledgements

## **Rimrock Opera Staff and Board of Directors**

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Darci Hertz, Financial Director  
Darrah Plank, Secretary  
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**ROCK Artistic Director:** Angie Langeliers

**Opera Shoppe Manager:** Jenny Chapman

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### **Facebook**

## **Voice Specialists** for artists of Rimrock Opera

ENT Associates, Steven A. Butler, MD, Brian T. Pelczar, MD,  
Cynthia A. Kennedy, MD, Dana Fink, P.A.-C

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ZooMontana, Jeff Ewert, Executive Director, live stage animals

## **REHEARSAL SPACE**

Rocky Mountain College Department of Music  
Shiloh Grand Center LLC

## **POSTERS**

The *Aida* poster and program cover were designed by  
Melanie Fabrizius.

**PROGRAM** Gail Hein, editor; Douglas Nagel, Terese  
Blanding, Shannon Powers Davis, Steve & Lucinda Butler,  
Darci Hertz, Tami Haaland

**AUTOMOBILES:** Mercedes Benz of Billings, Steve Zabawa

**HOUSING:** Artist home stays provided by Dr. & Mrs. John  
Berg, Dr. & Mrs. Mike Downing, Fay Ellis, Sharon Harris,  
Darrah Plank, Michelle and Sandy Reitz

## **RIMROCK OPERA AMBASSADORS and**

**VOLUNTEERS** Shannon Powers Davis, Chris Davis, Kohl's  
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Resources

**NOTE** Rimrock Opera takes pleasure in acknowledging and  
thanking all of its participants and volunteers. If your name  
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please accept our apology and our thanks and please notify us  
of any corrections.

**VISIT THE OPERA SHOPPE** for commemorative Rimrock  
Opera posters, T-shirts, tote bags, CDs and more. Opera glasses  
are available for rent to use during the show. Opera Shoppe is  
open in the theater lobby.

**USHERS** Rimrock Opera joins our patrons in thanking House  
Manager Connie Meland and the ABT volunteer usher corps.  
The services they provide for each performance are invaluable.

## **RIMROCK OPERA PROHIBITS**

**DISCRIMINATION** on the basis of race, color, national  
origin, sexual orientation, handicap or age.

# Meet the Artists

Full biographies at [www.rimrockopera.org](http://www.rimrockopera.org)

## Barbara Day Turner, *Conductor*



Maestra Turner is founder and music director of the San José Chamber Orchestra, now in its 19th season. An ardent advocate for new music, she has premiered more than 80 new works just with the SJCO. Her résumé also includes almost 100 operas and musical theater pieces. Most recently she has conducted the Redwood Symphony, the Orquesta Sinfónica de Aguascalientes; *Così fan tutte* for West Bay Opera; John Adams' *Nixon in China* for Portland Opera; *The King and I* for American Musical Theatre of San José; and *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Porgy and Bess* for Utah Festival Opera, where she also serves as Music Administrator. Her background also includes many years as conductor and artistic administrator with Opera San José where she conducted the world premieres of Henry Mollicone's *Hotel Eden*, Alva Henderson's *West of Washington Square*, Craig Bohmler and Daniel Helfgot's *The Tale of the Nutcracker* and George Roumanis' *Phaedra*, as well as repertoire pieces by Handel, Cavalli, Mozart, Rossini, Puccini, Bizet, Verdi, Britten, Stravinsky, and many others. Miss Day Turner holds a master's degree in harpsichord performance from San José State University, with advanced studies with the legendary Fernando Valenti defining an alter-ego musical life as a harpsichordist. Some her more unusual projects as musical director include the premiere of Randall Wong's Victorian Toy Theater Puppet Opera Household Opera at the Z Space in San Francisco; a performance of Ezra Pound's *Le Testament*; live orchestral accompaniment for an IMAX Laser show with score from science fiction shows; live music for the play *Amadeus*; and a multimedia orchestral work by Libby Larsen. Upcoming: Gounod's *Faust*, *Kiss me Kate*, and *Girl Crazy* with the Utah Festival Opera; plus numerous appearances as harpsichordist. Δ

## Matthew Haney, *Director*



Matthew Haney is currently working towards a DMA in Vocal Performance at the University of Kansas where he has performed as Germont in *La traviata* and Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*. Recently he was seen in the ensemble of *Carmen*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Tosca*, *La traviata*, and *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. As a Wichita Grand Opera Young artist, Mr. Haney has also performed with regional companies such as the Civic Opera of Kansas City in *Madame Butterfly*. Mr. Haney's directorial credits include assistant director for *The Rake's Progress*, *Patience*, and *Ruddigore* with the University of Kansas; assistant director for *The Flying Dutchman* with Mobile Opera, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, and *The Crucible* with Rimrock Opera; directing intern for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City's *Norma*, and *Suor Angelica* for the Lawrence Chamber Opera. Δ

## Douglas Nagel, *Producer and Chorus Master*



Native Montanan Douglas Nagel graduated from the University of Wyoming and The San Francisco Conservatory of Music before beginning a very active singing career. Douglas was last heard in West Bay Opera's and Mobile Opera's *Der fliegende Holländer*. He made his American Wagner singing debut as the title role in *The Flying Dutchman* for Greater Buffalo Opera Company. Mr. Nagel recently sang an all Wagner program from the newly formed Utah Lyric Opera, Orem, Utah, a program that was repeated in February 2011. He maintains a busy schedule as the artistic director for Rimrock Opera where he produces and directs two productions each season in addition to all of the administrative trappings of holding this position. He has been with the company since its inception and will have completed twenty-two productions at the end of this season. Other debuts included Arizona Opera, Sacramento Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Cedar Rapids Opera and Eugene Opera. Other orchestra works include Western Slope Music Festival, Bear Valley Music Festival and Music in the Mountains. A favorite of Maestro Kent Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony, Mr. Nagel sang *Doktor Faust*, *Oedipus Rex* and *Das klangende Lied*. Mr. Nagel has expanded his repertoire to over 40 roles with The Virginia Opera, El Paso Opera, West Bay Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, singing a wide repertoire from Scarpia, Giovanni, Germont, Magnifico, Sharpless, Pasquale, Onegin, Renato, Zurga, Leporello, Marcello, Bartolo, Trulove, Figaro and Wotan. John the Baptist in *Salome* became one of Nagel's signature role as he made his European debut in Rostock, Germany, and repeated it with Opera Columbus, The Virginia Opera and The Opera Co. of Philadelphia, even traveling with his own "head." Douglas created the role of Theseus in Roumanis' *Phaedra*, broadcast on PBS throughout the U.S. He received international attention when he created the role of Francisco de Santander in the Virginia Opera world premiere of Thea Musgrave's *Simon Bolivar*, later singing excerpts from the production at the Royal Albert Hall, London, broadcast on the BBC. Other world premiere operas include *West of Washington Square*, *Polpolvu*, *Powder Her Face*, and *Wuornos*. Mr. Nagel is heard on CD by Albany Records in the title role of Count Orlock (Dracula) in Rimrock Opera's world premiere recording of Henderson/Gioia's *Nosferatu*. Mr. Nagel is the Assistant Professor of Voice and Choral Studies at Montana State University Billings. Δ

# Meet the Artists

Full biographies at [www.rimrockopera.org](http://www.rimrockopera.org)

## Andrea Garritano, soprano ~ *Aida*



Andrea Garritano has recently been a soloist at the Lied Center for the Performing Arts in Lawrence, KS and the University of Kansas Orchestra's Opera Gala. She has performed the title roles in *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly* with the Kansas Concert Opera. A New York native, Ms. Garritano has appeared with Hudson Valley Opera, Tri-State Regional Opera, Delaware Valley Opera and Eugene Opera, as Susanna, Fiordiligi, Vitellia and Violetta. She has sung on the Celebrate! Brooklyn concert series with Il Piccolo Teatro dell' Opera and made her Carnegie Hall debut as a finalist with the New York Vocal Artists Competition. As an AGMA roster artist with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City she has appeared in *Aida*, *John Brown*, *La traviata*, *Turandot*, *Il trovatore* and *Der fliegende Holländer*. Ms. Garritano is in her final semester as a Doctor of Musical Arts student at the University of Kansas, including participation in a master class with iconic American Bass-Baritone, Samuel Ramey. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the Manhattan School of Music and a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Oregon, where she was a Performance Fellow and Apprentice Artist with Eugene Opera. She is on the Voice Faculty of Emporia State University and lives in Emporia, Kansas. Δ

## Christopher Bengochea, tenor ~ *Radames*



This Basque-American tenor began his musical career as a pianist, then moved into the study of opera at Montana State University and later the University of Montana. After becoming a winner at the Northwest Regional Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and winning third prize at the Internationale Societa Concertistica Vocal Competition in Santa Margherita-Ligure, Italy, he decided to pursue singing entirely. It was in Italy where Bengochea studied and worked with renowned tenor, Gianni Raimondi who described Bengochea as "having a voice...that will become very important in the future of opera." Mr. Bengochea's operatic repertoire embraces a wide range of roles, including Ruggero in *La Rondine*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Erik in Alva Henderson's *Nosferatu*, and Cavaradossi in *Tosca*. Companies with which he has performed include: Opera San Jose, Atlanta Opera, Opera Idaho, Opera Canada, da Corneto Opera, Center City Opera, Opera Company Brooklyn, Jarvis Conservatory, Intermountain Opera, Townsend Opera, Rimrock Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Pacific Repertory Opera, Livermore Valley Opera, West Bay Opera, Teatro Felice, Caramoor Opera, and the Tigulio Festival Opera, Stockton Opera Association, Opera Santa Barbara. Δ

## Michelle Berger, mezzo soprano ~ *Amneris*



Michelle Berger is a native of Montana. She grew up in Billings and attended the University of Montana and later the University of Colorado. Her vocal studies took her to Europe where she lived for many years, primarily based in Switzerland. Michelle's singing career allowed her to sing in both the United States and Europe. She has performed many varying opera roles including Ulrica in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Erda in Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, and Suzuki in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, among others. Ms. Berger's signature is the title character in Bizet's *Carmen*, the production with which she made her Rimrock Opera and Opera Idaho debuts. Ms. Berger recently appeared in RO's *Rigoletto* as Maddalena and Tituba in *The Crucible*. She lives in Billings where she owns and operates a Pilates studio. Δ

## Robert Aaron Taylor, baritone ~ *Amonasro*



Mr. Taylor has been hailed by critics as a "sonorous-voiced" baritone with "rich tones" who creates "a solid foundation for the entire performance." An artist of great flexibility, his diverse repertoire includes the title roles in *Rigoletto*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, as well as Dr. Bartolo (*Barber of Seville*), Baron Zeta (*Merry Widow*), Dr. Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*) and Schaunard (*La bohème*). Robert has performed across the country, including the San Diego Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Lyric Opera Cleveland and Long Island Opera. He has had the privilege of working with such distinguished artists as Virginia Zeani, Timothy Noble, Edoardo Müller, Lotfi Mansouri and Valéry Ryvkin. Mr. Taylor has sung concert solos all over the country, including Handel's immortal *Messiah*, Vaughan William's *Five Mystical Songs*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Requiem masses by Mozart and Fauré. *Aida* marks Robert's seventh appearance with RO. Δ

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Full biographies at [www.rimrockopera.org](http://www.rimrockopera.org)

## Dennis Rupp, bass ~ *Ramfis*



The role of Ramfis in Verdi's masterpiece *Aida* marks Dennis Rupp's eleventh production with Rimrock Opera. The California native first came to Billings to create the role of Heinrich Skuller in Alva Henderson's widely acclaimed *Nosferatu*. Since that time he has enjoyed a wide array of roles for RO and directed two, one act operas in RO's summer festival of 2009. Elsewhere in the United States, Mr. Rupp has performed leading roles with (among others) Anchorage Opera, Sacramento Opera, Long Beach Opera, Pacific Repertory Opera, Opera San Jose, Opera Nova, Opera Idaho, Los Angeles Opera Outreach and The Bear Valley Music Festival. His engagements have included the roles of Prince Gremin, Don Alfonso, Leporello, Don Basilio, Sarastro, Hoffman's Four Villains, Figaro, Sir Humphrey Davenaut in Marschner's *Der Vampyr*, to name but a few. Internationally, Mr. Rupp has performed in The People's Republic of China, Mexico, The Czech Republic, Italy, Germany and Austria. Of his recordings, most notable is his portrayal of Méfistofélès in Gounod's *Faust*, which received an L.A. Emmy Award for Best Entertainment Feature. Δ

## Daren Small, bass baritone ~ *King of Egypt*



Mr. Small, a Billings native, is a distinguished bass-baritone soloist throughout the region. He made his soloist debut at Montana State University during their performance of Mozart's *Requiem*. Since then, he has performed as a soloist in many venues. His most recent appearances include: *Ragtime*, *Rigoletto*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *The Impresario*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Miss Saigon*, and Handel's *Messiah*. Mr. Small has also appeared at Opera on the Avenue, Opera at the Bay, and Auction of Arias. In addition, he sings with the High Plains Chamber Singers. Mr. Small earned his B.A. in Music Education from Montana State University where he developed his passion for teaching. He is in his second year as Director of Choirs at Billings Senior High School where he directs five curricular choirs and two extra-curricular ensembles. He has also served as the Chorus Master for the Rimrock Opera. Many reputable soloists and educators have influenced his career, including Dennis Rupp, Lowell Hickman, Dr. Jon Harney, Dr. Kirk Aamot, and Dr. Steven Hart. Δ

## Carolyn Coefield, soprano ~ *High Priestess*



A Montana Native and resident of Billings, Ms. Coefield has performed with Rimrock Opera, Portland Opera Works!, Portland SummerFest, Helena Symphony, Helena Chamber Singers, Astoria Music Festival, Bel Canto Northwest, Portland Opera Guild, and The Yellowstone Chamber Players. In September 2010, Ms. Coefield returned to Rimrock Opera to sing the title role in Franz Lehár's *Merry Widow*. Previously with Rimrock Opera she sang the roles of Micaëla, and Gianetta. Other roles include: Pamina, Musetta, Mother in *Hansel and Gretel*, Countess, Second Lady, and Papagena. Upcoming performances include a tour with the Borgh Trio. Ms. Coefield is a member of the voice faculty at Rocky Mountain College. Δ

## Alex Heyneman ~ *Lighting Designer*

Mr. Heyneman's eyes were opened to the magic of performing arts at The Athenian School in Danville, California. Receiving his B.A. in technical theater at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, his early credits include *Scapino* and *Something's Afoot*. During his college years he lit many productions at Billings Studio Theater, including *The Glass Menagerie*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Company*. Mr. Heyneman began his career as a lighting intern at The Children's Theater Company in Minneapolis, later hired as a stage technician, working on original productions including *The Red Shoes*, and *The Wind in the Willows*. From 1987 to 1996, Alex was Technical Director for Montana's premiere performing arts center, the Alberta Bair Theater. Credits at the ABT include *South Pacific*, *Brigadoon*, *Carousel*, *A Chorus Line*, and the world premiere of the opera *Pamelia*. Mr. Heyneman debuted with Rimrock Opera in 2005, lighting the productions of each season since then. Δ

## Janie Westendorf ~ *Costume Artist*



Ms. Westendorf began her business almost 20 years ago as Westendorf Costumes, which has since transformed into Curtains Up Costumes, where their main focus is on costuming fabulous opera and theater companies throughout the United States. After graduating from the University of Northern Iowa with a degree in secondary education, she was first an educator. However, she found herself drawn to making costumes for the stage. Janie and her staff have been designing and creating costumes since the early 1990s. Janie is delighted to meet and work with so many wonderful and talented people through Rimrock Opera. Δ



# Meet the Artists

Full biographies at [www.rimrockopera.org](http://www.rimrockopera.org)

## **Krista Marshall~ Choreographer**



Krista began classical ballet training at seven with the School of Classical Ballet in Billings under Jana Stockton and Betty Loos. By junior high, Krista was fully dedicated to ballet and was awarded a full scholarship to Summer Dance Lab in Walla Walla Washington. She also participated in workshop intensives with New York Connection, taking class from Balanchine principle dancer, Conrad Ludlow and other New York City dancers. By her sophomore year she attended the Ballet West Conservatory in Salt Lake City, Utah and took master classes from New York City Ballet's Tom Mossbrucker and Jean Phillipe Malaty, both of the Aspen Sante Fe Ballet Company. In high school she worked with Artisan Dance (now Ballet Montana) with Sallyann Mulcahy, formerly of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and American Chamber Ballet. At Artisan Dance, Krista studied from Gelsey Kirkland (New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theater). Krista choreographs student works each year for the Billings Dance Academy and School of Classical Ballet where she teaches classical and contemporary technique. She also performs and choreographs for Terpsichore Dance Company. Δ

## **Richelle Stricker ~ Stage Manager**

Ms. Stricker was born and raised in Billings and graduated from Billings West High School in 2000. She played trumpet in Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, Orchestra, Marching Band, and Pep Band. She attended Montana State University Billings and earned a B.A. in music performance. She attended Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, but when Hurricane Katrina hit, she returned to Billings. Moving to another side of music, she joined Local 240, I.A.T.S.E., working shows and concerts and also for the Alberta Bair Theater and the Billings Symphony. She also works for J.D. Construction, trimming out and remodeling houses, and part-time at Log Cabin School, helping to shape the next generation. Δ

## **Kristen Klimper ~ Wig and Make-up Director**



Ms. Klimper has been Director of Hair and Makeup for eight of Rimrock Opera Company's productions in the last seven years. Ms. Klimper worked in salons in the Billings area for 10 years before returning to school and earning a degree in Liberal Studies in Music from Montana State University Billings, and currently studies with Douglas Nagel. Ms. Klimper loves using her multiple talents in music and hair artistry to enrich the Billings community. Ms. Klimper is currently teaching music and art for the YMCA, and has a private voice studio. Δ

## **Loretta Jensen Wittmer ~ Costume Director**

Mrs. Wittmer returns for her seventh production with Rimrock Opera. She made her Rimrock Opera debut in 2009 with *The Barber of Seville*. Raised in eastern North Dakota, Loretta learned to sew from her mother at the age of eight, and continued with sewing in 4-H and high school. Mrs. Wittmer studied music as well. Loretta has sewn for clients for over fifty years and has had shops in North Dakota and most recently, Loretta's Sewing Room in Billings. Continually seeking to learn and experiment with sewing techniques and products, Loretta now enjoys the new experience of working with the artists in Rimrock Opera. Δ

## **Marie A. Thompson ~ Costume Assistant**

Ms. Thompson has designed and built costumes for the former Ballet Binghamton, Binghamton, New York, where she learned to work with the choreographer and the music to create costumes specifically for dance. She also worked with volunteers to teach them the unique requirements of sewing for the ballet. The job included shopping for fabric locally and in New York City. Ms. Thompson worked briefly for the late Betty Fredricks, costumer at Tri-Cities Opera in Binghamton and for the theater department at State University of New York (SUNY) Binghamton. Her educational background is in Home Economics Education at Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, then called Drexel Institute of Technology. Δ



**Angie Langeliers, ROCK Director**



**Rimrock Opera Chorus for Kids (ROCK)** is a select choral program founded by the Rimrock Opera in September 2004. Its mission is “to challenge, to teach and to elevate—through music of the highest quality.”

Singers ages 6-18 are invited to audition for participation in a two-semester season with weekly rehearsals and many opportunities for public performances. Besides Rimrock Opera’s mainstage performances in Alberta Bair Theater and OperaFest dinner and show, ROCK has performed at such events as the Big Sky State Games, Mannheim Steamroller and Rita Coolidge concerts, Billings Symphony Orchestra and Chorale concerts, the Montana Music Teachers Association, Moss Mansion events and numerous other venues.

**Cantabile Choir - Grades 1-8**

As a part of this choir, students learn about vocal technique, choral singing and basic music theory concepts. The students perform two, three, and four-part treble music. They also learn music theory, history, rhythm, diction and vocal techniques.

**Bel Canto Choir - Grades 9-12**

This high school chorus performs music of varying genres, styles, and languages. These students learn more advance musicianship skills, including theory, history, rhythm and sight-singing.

**Auditions** are held twice a year in September and January. For information, call Rimrock Opera at 671.2214 or Mrs. Langeliers at 697.3455, or email [rimrockoperakids@gmail.com](mailto:rimrockoperakids@gmail.com). Learn more about ROCK on our website, [www.rimrockopera.org](http://www.rimrockopera.org), and Facebook. Δ

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*Upcoming Events*

**Rimrock Opera Chorus for Kids Concert**  
May 10, 2013

**ROCK CAMP - Youth Conservatory**  
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**Includes classical voice lessons**

**RIMROCK OPERA** 406-671-2214  
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**Opera on the Avenue**

**September 2013**

**Billings Studio Theatre presents**  
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Even with a sold-out theater, ticket sales cover only about 25% of the cost of staging an opera. Help is always needed to bridge the gap between ticket income and the expense of producing Grand Opera. Some of our many costs include employing the Rimrock Opera Orchestra, stagehands, lighting designers, technical staff, conductors and artists.

## Education and Outreach

Experiencing opera challenges and enriches students while creating a foundation for their lifelong enjoyment of the arts. Your support ensures the continuation and expansion of our many programs, which are a valuable resource for the community. Rimrock Opera Chorus for Kids (ROCK) is prospering. Demand is increasing dramatically for in-school programs and community performances. Rimrock Opera works hard to be everywhere for everyone.

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