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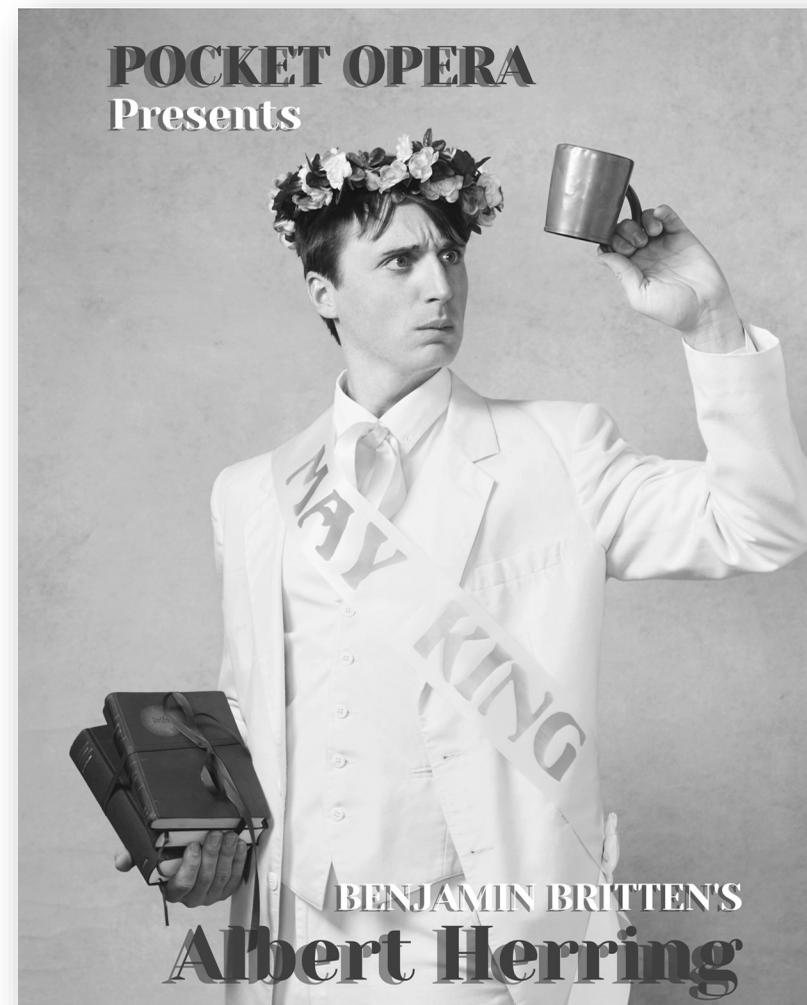


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05/05



Original English libretto
by Eric Crozier

April 23, 2023 | 2:00 pm

Hillside Club, Berkeley

April 30, 2023 | 2:00 pm

Legion of Honor Museum, San Francisco

May 7, 2023 | 2:30 pm

Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts

A Pocket Magic Flute

Our work continues on an exciting, groundbreaking project, Pocket Opera's animated/live-action hybrid program. We have completed filming of the live-action sequences and are nearly halfway through the animation process. Our youth orchestra recorded the score in February, and our team is hard at work on the study guides that will accompany this educational program.



Set in Africa, this retelling of Mozart's masterpiece features an all-Black cast, and a predominantly Black (and largely female) creative team.

We are incredibly grateful to the **National Endowment for the Arts, Opera America,** and our **Lead Sponsor Ruth Reznikoff** for their support of this project.

If you would like more information about this project, including ways to sponsor it, please contact Nicolas A. Garcia at nicolas@pocketopera.org

A special Pocket Opera Thank You to:

*Lamplighters Music Theatre, Masquers Playhouse, Old St. Mary's Cathedral
Chelsea Hollow, John Hull, Frank Johnson,
Chase Kupperberg, Heinz Langford, Miriam Lewis,
Gordon Pagnello, George Phillips, Melissa Wortman, Ted Zoldan*

*The amazing parents, friends and family:
Susan Friedland, Andrew Day, Mary Rauh
Alla Bolsheva, Alfred Yang
Valeria Estrada, Leandra Ramm, Jim Coniglio*

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We would like to acknowledge the crucial role that these generous organizations play in the well-being of Pocket Opera

San Francisco Grants for the Arts · Frank A. Campini Foundation
Marin Community · National Endowment for the Arts
Opera America · The Bernard Osher Foundation
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We would like to express our enormous gratitude to the generous Anonymous Angel who gave a \$40,000 Matching Grant for our 2022 Midyear Appeal

Thank you

LEGACY GIVING

Have you thought about including Pocket Opera in your tax or estate planning? Over the years, a number of farsighted patrons have been moved to support Pocket Opera beyond buying tickets and writing annual checks. In good years this additional backing has enabled expansion of our programming; in lean years it has proved crucial to survival!

Here are ways you can help ensure the company's financial health now and in the future:

- ◆ Remember Pocket Opera in your will, living trust, or other estate planning instrument.
- ◆ Donate appreciated stock or other securities to Pocket Opera, perhaps with a substantial tax benefit to you.
- ◆ Designate Pocket Opera as a beneficiary in your IRA, retirement account, or life insurance policy.
- ◆ Of course, you should consult with your legal and/or tax advisor to determine what strategy is best for you.

For more information, feel free to contact us at info@pocketopera.org, or call 415-972-8930

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THE ELSEWHERE FOUNDATION

While attempting to raise money for the 1983 season, Pocket Opera's management continually received polite declines, suggesting that they look "elsewhere" for funding. So, they looked to long-time loyal supporters, the audience, for assistance and ... The Elsewhere Foundation was born!

The Elsewhere Foundation members listed here have made gifts of \$250 or more to Pocket Opera between January 2022 and March 2023. They receive priority seating at all performances, advance season notice, invitations to VIP events and, of course, **our gratitude**.

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While we endeavor to keep our records correct and current, we apologize for any mistakes.

If you notice an error in our records, please let us know: info@pocketopera.org

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Albert Herring

Albert Herring Sam Faustine
Lady Billows (2023 Greenberg Artist) Caroline Altman
Sid Julio Ferrari
Nancy Courtney Miller
Florence Pike Kathleen Moss
Ms. Wordsworth Chelsea Hollow
Gedge the Vicar Lee Strawn
Upfold the Mayor Alex Taite
Superintendent Budd Charles Martin
Mrs. Herring Mary Rauh
Emmie Zora Day-Friedland
Cis Alliana Lili Yang
Harry James Coniglio
Mrs. Williams Ann Williamson

Music Director David Drummond
Stage Director Nicolas A. Garcia
Costumes Joy Graham Korst
Properties -
Assistant Stage Manager Daniel Yelen
Assistant Stage Manager Alla Bolsheva
Supertitles Ted Zoldan
Orchestra Contractor Nicola Gruen

POCKET PHILHARMONIC

Violin I Lylia Guion
Violin II Nicola Gruen
Viola Patrick Kroboth
Cello Farley Pearce
Double Bass Victor Ruiz
Flute Michelle Caimotto
Oboe Jon Arneson
Clarinet Andrew Friedman
Bassoon Robert Todd
French Horn Kyle Ko
Harp Gennaro Porcaro
Timpani/Percussion Beverly Dorcy
Piano David Drummond

Act 1: 60 minutes

20-minute Intermission

Acts 2 & 3: 85 minutes

This production is brought to you
with the generous support of
THE ELSEWHERE FOUNDATION

Some thoughts from our Director

It's about Time....

For decades, Pocket Opera has been producing opera in translation, highlighting the work of our brilliant founder, the late Donald Pippin. Only rarely did Donald produce works written in English originally. *Dido and Aeneas* and *The Rake's Progress* were two rarities we put on in the past, but never have we tackled a work by the great Benjamin Britten, until now. *Albert Herring*, Britten's charming and witty coming-of-age opera from the 20th century is an ideal fit to add to the Pocket Opera repertoire, and I'm delighted to present it this season. Some of you Britten fans might say, "it's about time!"

And indeed it is...

In discussing the show with Maestro David Drummond, he highlighted the prominence of *Time* as a figure in the show. Britten has, in his genius, created an opera about *Time*. Starting with the mysterious chiming clock in *Lady Billows'* house, striking eleven, Britten presents us with a sense of something about-to-happen. *Albert Herring* is a young man who has been on the precipice of adulthood for far too long, held back by fear and a somewhat domineering mother. The project of the opera is to push *Albert* into adulthood, where he can finally be the equal of his peer group--the characters of the lovers, *Nancy* and *Sid*.

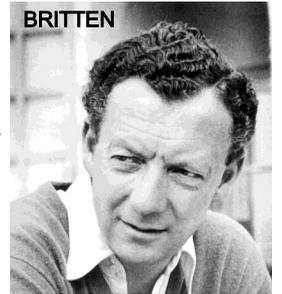
When *Albert* is contemplating his life, he repeats over and over, "it's about time, about time." *Albert* wants to dare to be bold, to be more like his friend *Sid*. But how can he achieve it? Just at this pivotal moment in his life, the town names him as the *King of the May*—in honor of his chaste, virtuous life as a good son to his mother. Worse yet, they promise to repeat the honor again and again, year after year—his chastity and virtue frozen in time. What is a boy to do...?

Benjamin Britten uses brilliant, dramatic music to tell this simple, poignant story—perhaps because to *Albert*, this is as crucial a moment as life may ever present to him. Written in 1946, Britten will have seen hundreds of boys coming back from World War II as men, perhaps broken and battered. Britten nods to them in a line from Superintendent *Budd*, "It's chaps like young *Albert* keep the British Empire on top of the world..."

One way or another, life robs us all of our innocence. Sam Faustine's brilliant portrayal of *Albert* gives us a chance to see a character take his life into his own hands, finally catching up to his individuation as a person, declaring, "please let me get on, for I'm all behind." And when you see it, you'll surely say, "it's about time!"

— *Nicolas A. Garcia* —

Music Director's Notes and Synopsis



Benjamin Britten is not a household name like Puccini or Richard Strauss but, of all operas composed in the 20th century, Britten's are the most frequently performed after these two giants. It is easy to understand why. Although his first opera was a blockbuster – *Peter Grimes*, Britten subsequently chose to make opera accessible for small companies by reducing the huge orchestra to a chamber size of just five wind, five strings, harp, and percussion – perfect for *Pocket*. These two latter instruments were vital in creating the unique, almost magical atmosphere of Britten's opera world and *Albert Herring* was the first opera in this new format. It is extraordinary the range of effects Britten achieves with these small forces where every player from the *Double Bass* to the *Flute* needs to be a virtuoso soloist. As you listen to the opera, please enjoy all the miniature concertos along the way, as well as the jazz harmonies and orchestral effects that would clearly influence the likes of *Bernstein* and *John Williams*.

From the first notes of this quirky fun opera, we are transported into a different musical universe and a different time – the era of *Victoria* and *Albert* – a hypocritical era whose outward show of morals subverted and vilified normal human behaviour. This is a perfect setting for two of Britten's recurring themes: the corruption of innocence and the struggles of an isolated individual at odds with society. In this story the individual is *Albert*, a young man trapped in time by his mother, whose jurisdiction over him keeps him as a pure and innocent boy against his instincts.

But it's not just about *Albert*, it's about all the different stages of human life from childhood to old age: children learning right from wrong - like stealing apples for example; adolescents reaching maturity and trying things out so as to break away from their parents; young adults becoming free to make choices about relationships, appearance and behaviour. And it's about how in time these young adults themselves become parents, pillars of the community, and eventually old people who look back with rose tinted spectacles on their past while forgetting what it was actually like to be young. Indeed, throughout the opera Britten reminds us of the relentlessness of time by constant chiming of a clock, and more importantly the striking of the "eleventh hour" – a significant reference to the running out of time and the need for change!

Set in the village of *Loxford*, *Albert Herring* is a young man of about 22 years of age who is still tied to his mother's apron strings, made to work in her grocer's shop all day, without any of the normal pleasures a boy would indulge in, and therefore none of the vices. His friend *Sid* tries to convince him to let himself go – to drink, hunt, gamble and get himself a girlfriend – someone like his own *Nancy*, the baker's daughter. But *Albert* is still afraid of his penny-pinching Mum, conscientious about the cost of every single item in the shop, and the village kids are afraid of him.

Meanwhile the pillars of *Loxford* society, the *Vicar*, *Mayor*, *Police Chief* and *School Teacher* are meeting at the house of *Lady Billows* to discuss what is to be done about the perceived abominable morals of *Loxford's* young people and the rising pregnancy rate. *Lady Billows* remembers her own youth and being chosen as *May Queen* - symbol of purity. She wants to instigate a *May Queen* festival in *Loxford*, to set an example, but all the *Loxford* girls carefully selected by the "Council" are rejected by *Lady Billows'* fierce housemaid, who has conducted her own sneaky investigations! In despair the *Superintendent* suggests a *May King* instead - touting *Albert*.

The last thing *Albert* wants is to be put on display in some white virginal costume, and he argues with his Mum who is clearly more interested in the £25 prize money (worth around \$1,000 dollars today), but come *May Day* he finds himself the humiliating object of a huge village festival with numerous speeches dedicated to him. He is a pressure cooker waiting to explode, and *Sid* provides the release valve by spiking his lemonade with rum. Arriving home tipsy for the first time in his life, *Albert* realises he is fed up of people laughing at him for his "goodness, and needs to experience life to the full (he secretly fancies *Nancy* too) and resolves to go out on a spree using the prize money. When he hasn't returned home by the next morning, the whole village goes out searching for him until his *May King's* wreath is eventually found trampled, and they presume the worst! But their grief turns to anger when he turns up in the middle of their mourning. *Albert* however, is his own man at last, and, decadently immune to their lecturing, he recounts his debauched adventures before vehemently confronting his Mum, letting her know that he is in charge now. No longer forced to count the pennies, he happily gives out freebies to the village children and tosses away the hated wreath.

It is perhaps serendipitous that the timing of this production not only coincides with *May Day* but the actual coronation of a real *May King* in Great Britain!

David Drummond

PRODUCTION STAFF

Joy Graham Korst *Costumes*

Joy Graham Korst is pleased to return to Pocket Opera for her 4th production as costumer. This opportunity has also introduced her to *Albert Herring* for the very first time in her long operatic career. Just a few weeks ago she was acknowledged for her costuming and design work for the premier of *Prospero's Island*, a Ninth Planet and InTandem Co-Production. Following *Albert Herring*, she is looking forward to a well-deserved break before singing with Solo Opera's production of *The Three Feathers*.

Daniel Yelen *Properties—Assistant Stage Manager*

Daniel started his theatrical career in the chorus of Oakland Opera's *The Magic Flute* over three decades ago. From the beginning he couldn't help meddling with props, or applying needle and thread to costume pieces. He has performed, designed, built, sewn, and provided technical support for many Bay Area stages, including Lamplighters Music Theatre, New Conservatory Theatre, The Mountain Play, The San Francisco Mime Troupe, and A.C.T. Daniel has been prop designer for more than 80 Pocket Opera productions since 2003, and he hopes to get the hang of it soon.

Nicola Gruen *Orchestra Contractor*

Nicola first performed violin in Pocket Opera with Donald Pippin while a UC Berkeley undergraduate. She studied violin performance at the Royal Academy of Music and performed for several years in the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony and English National Ballet and on film soundtracks such as Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge*. After freelancing for ten years on the East Coast, Nicola returned to the Bay Area in 2012 and has been performing regularly with Pocket Opera and regional orchestras. When she's not performing, Nicola works full time in gifts and endowments at the University of California.

LEADERSHIP STAFF

Nicolas A. Garcia *General Director— See bio of page 7.*

Chung-Wai Soong *General Manager*

Chung-Wai's extensive repertoire includes world premieres by David Chesworth (*Sabat Jesus*); Lisa Bielawa's groundbreaking opera, *Vireo*; Elijah (Meira Warshauer's *Elijah's Violin*). Concert soloist in works of Bach, Fauré, Mozart, Dvořák, Berlioz, Handel, Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* under Kurt Masur, also performed at Ojai Festival with Jeremy Denk. Operatic roles include Mityukha (*Boris Godunov* - San Francisco Symphony), Erster Nazarener (*Salome*), Sadistic Sailor (*Breaking the Waves*), Melchior (*Amahl and the Night Visitors* - Hawaii Opera Theatre), Un vieux paysan (*Ariane et Barbe Bleue* - West Edge Opera). Upcoming engagements include Marco (*Gianni Schicchi* - Hawaii Opera Theatre), Chamberlain (*Le Rossignol* - West Edge Opera), and Il Ducato with Lamplighters Music Theatre.

George Phillips *Office Manager*

George Phillips is thrilled to join the Pocket Opera team as the Office Manager. George has had a long career managing some of the largest law firms in the world and is delighted to make the transition to nonprofit arts. George has also worked behind the scenes as crew at many community theater and professional companies, including Lamplighters Music Theatre and Runaway Stage Productions. George enjoys carpentry, and often lends his skills to set construction, including assisting with this season's *Albert Herring*.



ARTIST PROFILES



Sam Faustine *Albert Herring*

Sam Faustine performs a wide variety of genres ranging from Baroque opera to modern music theatre. Recently, he was a member of the first National Tour of Broadway's *A Christmas Carol*. Sam has appeared in Europe, China, and across the US in roles such as Anthony in *Sweeney Todd*, Tony in *West Side Story*, Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Curly in *Oklahoma!*, and Candide in *Candide*. In addition to staged performances, Sam sings with many sacred music and chamber ensembles across the country. When not performing classical music, Sam plays in a QUEEN cover band impersonating Freddie Mercury. @samfaustinesf



Caroline Altman *Lady Billows*

2023 Greenberg Artist

Caroline Altman is delighted by her Pocket Opera debut and return to the opera stage. Recent credits include *Follies* (SF Playhouse), *Sweeney Todd*, *The Light in the Piazza* (Theaterworks), and *The Most Happy Fella*, *Carmelina*, *The Golden Apple*, *Fanny*, and many others (42nd St. Moon). Operas: *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters* (Oakland Opera Theater), *The Telephone* (El Paso Opera), *The Mother of Us All* (La Jolla Civic Symphony). Caroline earned her degree in music from UC San Diego, is a composer, author, tap dancer, and Education Director at San Francisco Opera Guild where she directs the Opera Scouts! www.carolinealtman.com



Kathleen Moss *Florence Pike*

Kathleen Moss, mezzo soprano, has performed with San Francisco Opera, Opera San José, West Bay Opera, West Edge Opera, Livermore Valley Opera, Fremont Opera, San Francisco Lyric Opera, Cinnabar Theater, and is a former Resident Artist with the San Francisco Opera Center. Concert engagements include solo appearances with the Sacramento Choral Society & Orchestra, Stockton Symphony, Fremont Symphony, Mendocino Music Festival, UC Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Masterworks Chorale, Bay Choral Guild, Handel Opera Project, Camerata California, and a live concert broadcast on National Public Radio. As a crossover artist, she has performed with American Musical Theater of San Jose, Sacramento's Music Circus, 42nd Street Moon, and Lamplighters Music Theatre.



Julio Ferrari *Sid*

Julio Ferrari is thrilled to make his sixth appearance with Pocket Opera, in the role of Sid. A San Francisco native, Julio attended San Francisco City College, San Diego State and San Francisco State Universities where he studied voice, and now works in Human Resources. When not singing or working, he can be found hiking the cityscape, strumming his guitar, or baking sourdough bread. Some of his recent roles include Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*, Private Willis in *Iolanthe*, and the title role in *Don Giovanni*.



Courtney Miller *Nancy*

Nancy is the first role Courtney Miller sang with an orchestra and it is a joy to revisit this ensemble piece. Since her first *Albert Herring*, Courtney has garnered many accolades in opera and art song. She is currently preparing a recital series, most recently performing with 3340 Recitals, and is a 2023-24 Opera San José Resident Artist. Career highlights include Sister St. Charles in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (San Francisco Opera); Hannah in *The Passenger* (Detroit Opera); Mercédès in *Carmen* (Florida Grand Opera); Meg in *Little Women* (Madison Opera); Meg Page in *Falstaff* (Virginia Opera); and Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera Saratoga). @mezzomiller | www.courtneyallycemiller.com



Chelsea Hollow *Ms. Wordsworth*

Chelsea Hollow is known for her “soaring high range” and “stage panache” performing with West Edge Opera, SF Opera Guild, West Bay Opera and more. Hollow has a passion for performing and premiering new works including the roles of Helen Chavez in *Dolores* by Nicolas Benavides and Fenghuang in *Hutong* by Kui Dong. Her favorite traditional roles include Queen of the Night, Blonde, Olympia and Lakmé. Concert appearances include Berkeley Symphony and Golden Gate Symphony Orchestra. This Spring, Chelsea is proud to be releasing a solo album, *Cycles of Resistance*, with Aerocade Music. Find out more at chelseahollow.com.



Lee Strawn *Gedge the Vicar*

Lee Strawn is delighted to sing the Vicar, a role he’s performed several times. He has sung Don Pasquale, Germont (*La Traviata*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan Tutte*) and many others for Pocket Opera. He created the leading role of John Muir in *John Muir’s Mountain Days* (Shellie Award – Best Actor in a Musical). He also created the role of LeFevre in *The Phantom of the Opera - SF*. Other roles: Judge Turpin (*Sweeney Todd*) with TheatreWorks, and the title role in Man of La Mancha for Sierra Rep. Lee and his wife, Laurie, live in San Francisco with their daughter, Julia. www.SFSings.com.



Alex Taite *Upfold the Mayor*

Alexander Taite graduated in 2007 from Pepperdine University where he studied music theory and composition, vocal performance, and jazz piano. Previously, Alex has enjoyed teaching at the Oakland School for the Arts; teaching with the SF Opera Guild; conducting the graduate level ensemble at the San Francisco Boys Chorus; coaching at Cantare Con Vivo; directing, and singing in recording projects around the Bay Area; and performing on many Bay Area opera stages. He currently finds great joy in singing with the San Francisco Opera and Symphony choruses; Teaching piano, music theory, and voice; and Directing Chorus Eclectic.



Mary Rauh *Mrs. Herring*

A special thank you to the creative team of Albert Herring and to friends and family for your support. Several favorite Pocket Opera roles include Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Orsini in *Lucrezia Borgia*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Charlotte in *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*, and Handel’s *Serse*. Mary is a soloist and section leader with the Mission Dolores church choir.



Charles Martin *Superintendent Budd*

Charles Martin is thrilled to appear as Superintendent Budd in this amazing piece by Benjamin Britten. Charles's first Pocket Opera production was *Tosca*, in which he appeared as Angelotti. He has performed many times with Lamplighters Music Theatre, where he has appeared in most of the classic bass-baritone roles. When not singing, Charles enjoys functional programming, cycling, and board games.



Zora Day-Friedland *Emmie*

Zora Day-Friedland is a high school junior who has grown up onstage with Pocket Opera in *Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*, *The Elixir of Love*, *The Two Widows* and *La Rondine*. She has appeared in San Francisco Opera productions of *Carmen*, *Turandot*, *Tosca* and *Fidelio*. A member of the SF Opera Scouts and Opera America/Opera Teen Council, Zora also sings in Albany High School Chamber Choir and is a cast member of Dinner Detectives.



Alliana Lili Yang *Cis*

Alliana Lili Yang is a 12-year-old actor, dancer, and a classically trained vocalist based in the Bay Area. She is thrilled about her Pocket Opera debut. Alliana trains and performs with San Francisco Opera, American Conservatory Theater, and Westlake School for the Performing Arts. She is an international multi-award winning vocalist, a community activist, and a solo cantor at St. Mary’s Cathedral. Her favorite roles include Margaret Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* (SVS), Kathy Selden in *Singin’ in the Rain Jr.* (WSPA/MTC), and Joey in *Super Happy Awesome News!* (BKA/Broadway Sacramento). To learn more, visit www.AllianaLiliYang.com



James Coniglio *Harry*

James Coniglio is delighted to make his Pocket Opera debut at 8 years old! This season, James starred as Tiny Tim in A Christmas Carol with American Conservatory Theater and Paggio in *Falstaff* with Opera San José. James sings with San Francisco Boys Chorus, including performances at Oakland A’s games, and the Ghirardelli Square Tree Lighting. James is a student at Pittsburg Performing Arts Academy and the Young Conservatory at ACT; he trained with Pittsburg Theater Youth Company in *Seussical* and *Lion King Jr.* Upcoming engagements include Little Boy in *Ragtime* with Lyric Theater and *Gypsy* with Woodminster summer musicals.



Nicolas A. Garcia *Stage Director and General Director*

Nicolas began his career with Pocket Opera over twenty five years ago in the chorus of *Tales of Hoffmann*. Since then he has gone on to perform many roles with many companies throughout the Bay Area and beyond. Nicolas began his directing career fifteen years ago, again, right here at Pocket Opera. Over those years, he worked as Assistant Director at Opera San José, Michigan Opera Theatre, and for several productions at San Diego Opera. In 2017 he worked at the Royal Swedish Opera as Associate Director on their production of *La Cenerentola*.



David Drummond *Music Director*

David Drummond has conducted opera for ENO, Scottish Opera, Gothenburg Opera; including *Boris Godunov* for Kharkov Opera. He was Director of Opera at University College, London, Director of the London Oriana Choir and a professor at the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music. He has worked with songwriters such as Beth Nielsen Chapman and rock legend Robert Plant. Orchestras he has conducted include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Kharkov Philharmonic & the BBC Concert Orchestra. A CD of his Christmas carol arrangements was released in 2013. He has been a regular conductor for Pocket Opera.