

# The Secret Diaries of Pennsylvania Avenue

All musical selections are composed by W.A. Mozart  
with sound design by Danielle Jagelski

## Musical Selections

(in order of appearance)

Overture

*La clemenza di Tito* (1791), K. 621

Arranged for four hand piano by Richard Kleinmichel  
Colin Shepard & Sequoia

In diesen heil'gen Hallen

*Die Zauberflöte* (1791), K. 620

Allison Knotts & Colin Shepard

Un moto di gioia

*Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), K. 492

Bailey Snelgrove & Sequoia

Voi che sapete

*Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), K. 492

Arranged and Performed by Sadie Gregg & Sequoia

Welche wonne, welche Lust

*Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), K. 384

Marianne Sadée & Colin Shepard

Se vuol ballare

*Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), K. 492

Madeline Ross & Colin Shepard

Se il tuo duol

*Idomeneo* (1781), K. 366

Leslie Hassberg & Colin Shepard

Als Luise die Briefe

(1787), K. 520

Lindsey Johnson & Colin Shepard

Come scoglio

*Così fan tutte* (1790), K. 588

Erin Walker & Colin Shepard

Se l'augellin sen fugge

*La finta giardiniera* (1775), K. 196

Elliot Menard & Sequoia

Una donna a quindici anni

*Così fan tutte* (1790), K. 588

Joannah Ball & Sequoia

Clarinet Concerto

in A Major (1791), K. 622

Dylan Aguayo

## **We acknowledge the land we occupy in the Portland Metro area, as well as the lands on which we view this project.**

“The Portland Metro area rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River creating communities and summer encampments to harvest and use the plentiful natural resources of the area.”  
(Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable, 2018)

We thank the original caretakers of this land.

## **Notes from the Director**

In the spirit of *Secret Diaries*, I'll tell you a secret of my own: I didn't know if this piece would be possible. When the world changed in the spring, we already had a cast, an adapted script, and two months of rehearsal and performance time blocked out. We faced the same choice that every arts organization continues to face: cancel, or dare to adapt. But how to take an opera—an art form whose power (for me) lies in the motion of a singer's sound waves through my body, in the physical experience of resonance—online? From separate spaces? The task was daunting, but we had some key things working in our favor: the privilege of time and the exceptional creativity and adaptability of our cast and production team.

In our adaptation of *La clemenza di Tito*, the opera begins with things already at a tipping point within the Tito White House. The atmosphere is volatile: tensions are high, secrets abound. With this in mind, we began our exploration with the questions: How did things get to this point? How did these characters become the people they are when the opera begins? This led us into a rich exploration of backstory, driven by the performers' curiosity and questions. We zeroed in on key moments from each characters' past, building out the events and relationships that shaped them and matching them with a Mozart art song or aria. We devised original scenes, using the performers' own homes and spaces as the setting. Together, these 10 videos and their associated documents make up a rich and playful prequel to the events of our adaptation of *La clemenza di Tito*, all created by the performers themselves.

Then the production team did their incredible work, editing the videos, designing and building a fully-explorable website to host them, imagining an opera experience that allows the audience to explore at their own pace, following their own interest. Once again, we met on Zoom, collaborating from Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, and New York.

When I click through this project, I am moved by the resilience, imagination and perseverance of these artists. I am inspired by the relentless pursuit of “what if” contained in each page. And I am humbled that I ever doubted what is possible when a group of creative people come together and set their eyes on a goal.

Thank you for entering into the unknown with us.

-Joellen

## **Notes from the Music Director**

The sounds you will hear in *The Secret Diaries of Pennsylvania Avenue* are glimpses into the lives of characters from W. A. Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*. By using material from Mozart operas, lieder, and concertos, the artists have collaboratively constructed peeks into private moments, previous to the drama in Renegade Opera's full production (Summer 2021). Their stories show love affairs, struggles, and key moments that shaped them into the characters to be seen in *La clemenza di Tito*.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, our artists recorded their individual parts from home, with whatever equipment and resources they already possessed. After that, the parts were combined digitally, along with added incidental music. Their costumes come from their own closets, repurposed and transformed via patterns created by designer Ophir El-boher, but sewn and modified by the singers themselves. The arias chosen are from previously studied and performed repertoire – reimagined to fit the performer's character in *La clemenza di Tito*. Nearly every element of this project plays on the concept of examining resources available to you, reimagining its use, and constructing a new creation.

When devising and composing the aural elements of this project, I continued in the vein of transforming old to new, and repurposing what was available to me. I explored the concept of reusing and reimagining not only through physical materials, but sound material as well. The introductions and arrangements you will hear are composed almost exclusively of sounds from the artists' recordings, and found sounds within my personal quarantine-environment. All the beeps, bops, static, screeches, taps, and tones have been clipped, processed, and reimagined from the aria that follows.

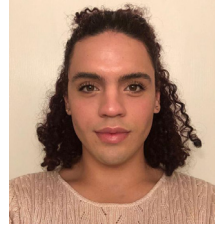
*The Secret Diaries of Pennsylvania Avenue* takes a centuries-old genre, thoughtfully analyzes the material, deconstructs it, and finally reconstructs the elements to fit our world in this moment. From rehearsal to (perpetual) performance, Mozart has been modernized.

I hope you enjoy it.

-Danielle

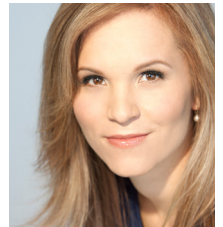
## Our Artists

**Dylan Aguayo** (Clarinet) is graduating from the University of Idaho in 2021 with a performance degree in clarinet and vocal studies. Dylan has performed for various types of student and faculty recitals on both instruments, including the lead tenor role in Britten's "Albert Herring" and principal clarinetist for the Vandal Opera's production of Bizet's "Carmen." Dylan is now preparing their graduate auditions for some their dream schools in France, London, Toronto, and New York City.



**Leo Balkovetz** (Author) is a vocalist, writer, teacher, and translator based in Cambridge, MA. He writes supertitles for Italian, French, German and Latin operas. He wrote Justice or Mercy with Promenade Opera Project (2017) and played the role of Liebermann. He teaches preschool and performs with multiple groups in the Boston area.

Soprano **Joannah Ball** (Sylvia Wilkes) brings her shimmering, facile voice to a wide range of repertoire. Recent performances include soloist with Festival Oregon Chorale in Handel's Messiah, Rutter's Requiem with Willamette Master Chorus, Madame Herz in Mozart's Der Schauspieldirektor with Dramatic Vocal Arts at Willamette and Opera Theater Oregon's Two Yosemite's.



**Amelia Brey** (Sound Editor) is a composer and audio engineer whose music has been described as possessing "haunting beauty" and "a deep, disquieting power" (National Sawdust Log). Hailing from Tallahassee, Florida, Brey is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and a current doctoral candidate at the Juilliard School.

**Flora Carey** (Website Designer) is a multidisciplinary artist, working primarily in graphic/web design, seamstressing, and embroidery. She is currently based in New York City.



**Alexandra Epstein** (Video Director and Editor) is a Los Angeles based documentary filmmaker, cinematographer, and editor. Her focus is at the intersection of film and human rights. Recently, she has worked with the filmmaking team of the Kartemquin Films documentary, The Dilemma of Desire, and is assistant to the director on There's Someone Inside Your House (Netflix, 2020).

**Sadie Gregg** (Sara Wilkes) has been commended by the press as "a mezzo-soprano with a rich, flexible instrument." Recent performances: Seattle Opera, Portland Opera, Friends of Chamber Music, Opera on Tap Portland, and Cult of Orpheus. Upcoming: Opera A La Cart (Portland Opera), Beethoven's 9th Symphony (Tualatin Valley Symphony). [www.SadieGregg.com](http://www.SadieGregg.com)



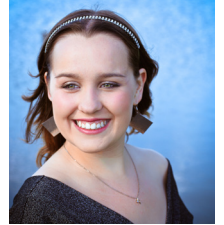
**Leslie Hassberg** (Petra Thompson) is a versatile singer, instrumentalist and producer. Her opera credits include the title role in Carmen and Azucena in Il Trovatore. Leslie composed and premiered a song cycle entitled "Confrontations with the Devil in the Form of Love," and created "A Queer Night at the Opera," a concert showcasing LGBT performers, composers and characters.

## Our Artists



**Danielle Jagelski** (Music Director and Musical Design) is a conductor based in New York City. Her recent credits include Idaho Music Educators Conference, Motus Vocal Ensemble, and Renegade Opera. As an experimental musician, she had recently performed in Rhymes with Opera's Northwest salon concert with her percussion/voice duo. She is dedicated to promoting equity in the music world, and has presented research on mixed race studies throughout the US and Canada. Danielle will be beginning her masters studies in orchestral conducting at Manhattan School of Music in Fall 2020.

**Lindsey Rae Johnson**, soprano, hails from Minnesota. After completing music degrees at Luther College and the University of North Texas, she moved to Portland in 2016. Lindsey has performed locally with Portland Opera, Ping & Woof Opera, Queer Opera, Opera on Tap, Mocks Crest Productions, and Light Opera of Portland. [www.lindseyraejohnson.com](http://www.lindseyraejohnson.com)



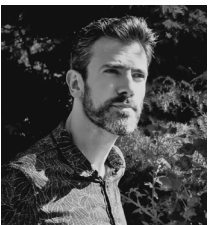
**Allison Kim-Yok Knotts**, mezzo soprano, is a student of Nancy Olson Chatalas. She graduated from Oregon State University, studying with Megan Sand. Opera roles include Third Lady in Die Zauberflöte, Marcellina in Le nozze di Figaro, and Mrs. Herring in Albert Herring. Ms. Knotts has performed with Corvallis Repertory Singers, Willamette Master Chorus, Opera on Tap PDX, Ping & Woof Opera, Portland Summer Opera Workshop, and Portland Opera.

**Elliot Menard** (Anna Liebermann) is a grant writer, opera-maker, and mezzo-soprano dedicated to creating ethical, accessible, and radical opera that explores the boundaries of the operatic medium. Elliot is part of the Renegade Opera administrative team and our in-house Grant Writer! She holds a BA in Classics from Reed College and has performed with Portland's Big Mouth Ensemble, Aquilon Music Festival, and at various performances and concerts at Reed College.



**Madeline Ross** (Flavia Tito) made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2019, and was hailed for "effortlessly nailing" her recent performance as Queen of the Night with Lark Opera (Oregon Arts Watch). She was named National Champion of the National Association of Teachers of Singing classical voice competition, and has recently been seen with Portland Opera, Opera on Tap Portland, Aquilon Music Festival, Opera Theater Oregon, and Promenade Opera Project. Mrs. Ross is the Founder and Executive Director of Renegade Opera. [www.madelinelross.com](http://www.madelinelross.com)

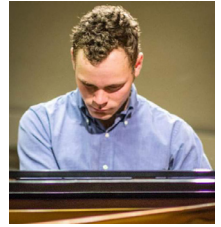
**Marianne Sadée** (Victoria Booth) has sung in concert and staged works in the Midwest, Pacific Northwest, Austria and Italy. She holds a MA in Music from the University of Iowa. Marianne has performed with Oregon East Symphony & Chorale, Portland State University, Portland Opera, Opera on Tap Portland, and Mock's Crest Opera.



British-born **Sequoia** (Pianist) has worked for such companies as the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Rambert Dance Company, and the BBC Singers, and has been working for Portland Opera & Opera Theater Oregon since his arrival in Portland.

## Our Artists

**Colin Shepard** (Pianist) is the music director at Cedar Hills United Church of Christ and an active collaborative pianist and music coach. He has performed with the Portland Gay Men's Chorus, MET Grammy-winner Audrey Luna, and more. He received his Masters in Piano at Portland State University, he was the Graduate Teacher's Assistant at PSU for collaborative piano, accompanying and singing with the internationally-winning PSU Chamber Choir. He has been heard playing solo piano on AllClassical FM and has performed in over 600 recitals specializing in vocal collaborative piano.




**Bailey Snelgrove** (Sylvia Wilkes) is a vocalist and performer currently living in Portland Oregon. After leaving Southern Oregon University, where she studied for her MA in vocal performance and participated in several local choirs and companies, she has taken a break from classical music and focused mainly on jazz. She is now thrilled to be participating in her first Portland opera.

**Joellen Sweeney** (Stage Director) is a director and actor from Portland, Oregon. Recent credits include work with Artists Repertory Theatre, Shaking the Tree Theatre and Portland Experimental Theatre Ensemble. She is the co-founder of Bedrock Theatre, a performance collective that combines storytelling, live music and hiking in parks and wilderness areas. She is currently pursuing an MFA in acting at the University of Washington. [www.joellensweeney.com](http://www.joellensweeney.com)



**Erin Walker** (Flavia Tito) is a soprano who has been living in Portland for the last 10 years. She performs regularly with Opera on Tap Portland, as well as with Portland Summerfest Opera in the Park, and Ping and Woof Opera. She has a private studio of voice and piano students. She studies with baritone Richard Zeller.

 **RENEGADE OPERA** is committed to reinvigorating the operatic art form, expanding upon the classical framework, and creating accessible, immersive, and modern opera. By offering emerging artists paid opportunities to create informed, personal, and collaborative interpretations of classical repertoire, we create thought-provoking and intimate theatrical experiences. We strive to curate radical and ethical performances, reclaim narrative power for traditionally underrepresented voices, and broaden the impact of the operatic art form on Portland's community.

This project was made possible in part by a grant from



and support from our fiscal sponsors Our Song Artists.

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