

2025/2026 SEASON

the dallas opera®



THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

OCTOBER 18, 2025 | FEBRUARY 28, 2026



FAMILY PERFORMANCE

THE LITTLE PRINCE

NOVEMBER 15, 2025 | FEBRUARY 15, 2026

THE MARGOT AND BILL WINSPEAR OPERA HOUSE

Season Sponsor: The VanSickle Family Foundation in memory of Edith and Elmer VanSickle



The Dallas Morning News



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

Welcome! Thank you for joining us at the Winspear Opera House today. Each year, we are thrilled to bring the magic of opera to generations, young and old, here inside our theater. We are proud to bring you perennial favorite **THE THREE LITTLE PIGS** and new-to-TDO **THE LITTLE PRINCE** for our family opera program this season.

There's nothing quite like watching young audiences experiencing opera for the first time. If you brought your children or your grandchildren or even somebody else's children here today, you are helping pass along love of an art form that has endured through the centuries to entertain, uplift, and inspire us to think about big ideas and even bigger dreams. Please enjoy the performance!

Kristian Roberts, Director of Education
Susan Geyer, Education Committee Chair

EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Christopher A. Leach, Education Production Manager
De'Courtneyous Miller, Education Program Manager
Hadassah Misner, Education and Outreach Assistant
Clarissa Pompa, Community Engagement Manager

LAND AND PEOPLE **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Welcome to the Winspear Opera House.

We are delighted that you are joining us to experience opera. As an opera company, we are storytellers, and we hope to uplift the stories of those who were here before us.

We acknowledge and honor that we are on the ancestral land of various tribal nations, including the Caddo, Wichita, Commanche, and Apache Nations, who have stewarded this land and cared for its waterways since time immemorial. We also pay respect to the enslaved African people whose stolen labor helped build the beginnings of this city after the forced removal of the original stewards of the land.

This region holds generations of songs and stories of the many people who have, now, and will call this place home.

As we harmonize entertainment, education, and artistic quality, we hope you will join us in honoring the stories of our past, present, and future.

We encourage everyone to learn more about its history and the pathways that brought us together.



**Learn More about
Dallas History**

thedallasopera®

presents

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

Music by W. A. Mozart

Words and story adapted by John Davies

Saturday, October 18, 2025 | Saturday, February 28, 2026

The Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the
The AT&T Performing Arts Center

Sung in English with Projected English Titles

Cast

Despina	Ashley Townsley (10/18) Kathryn Piña (2/28)
Cherubino	Rachel Moon (10/18) Karina Buruca-Kunda (2/28)
Don Giovanni	Dylan Elza (10/18) Addison Vinson (2/28)
Wolfgang Bigbad	Travis McGuire (10/18) Brad Ritschel (2/28)

Creative Team

Director	Ryan Lescalleet
Set and Costume Designer	Tommy Bourgeois
Lighting Designer	Aaron Johansen
Associate Lighting Designer	Candice Miears
Music Director	Mary Dibbern, Ph.D.
Pianist	Sara Steele
Projected Titles	Mary Dibbern, Ph.D.
Touring Production Supervisor & Stage Manager	Ryan Lescalleet
Education Touring Assistant	Katelyn Kocher

The performance will last approximately 30 minutes with no intermission.

Sets built and painted by Dallas Stage Scenery

Presenting Sponsor



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SYNOPSIS

The Three Little Pigs is a one-act opera adapted by John Davies from the traditional fairy tale, featuring music by Wolfgang A. Mozart.

The story begins with three little pigs at their mother's house. Despina, a little girl pig who loves going to the library, is reading a book. Her brothers, Cherubino and Don Giovanni, have not yet learned how useful the library can be. But they are about to find out, for Wolfgang Bigbad, the Big Bad Wolf, is on his way. Despina explains that it is time for them to build their own house, and immediately her two brothers begin to argue about the choice of building materials. Cherubino claims that straw is the best; however, Don Giovanni is sure that sticks would be better. They turn to Despina to settle the argument and she tells them that she is going to the library to check out books that will teach her about building houses. The boys laugh as if it is the most ridiculous idea they have ever heard!

Despite Cherubino and Don Giovanni's doubts, they follow Despina as she makes her way through the woods to the library, where Wolfgang Bigbad himself is pacing back and forth in front of the building. He hasn't eaten all day and would love to get his paws on a small pig, or better yet, two or three! When he sees the three little pigs, he "hides" himself by pretending to be a statue in order to surprise them. Despina goes directly into the library while the boys play outside. Soon they realize that the "statue" is really Wolfgang Bigbad! Cherubino sees that Don Giovanni is terrified and makes him approach the "statue" to invite him to dinner. The "statue" (Wolfgang) nods his head to accept the invitation.

Meanwhile, Despina has found all of the books she needs, and the three pigs prepare to build their houses. Don Giovanni has built his house of sticks, which Wolfgang blows down. Cherubino has gone ahead with his plans to build a straw house, but it proves to be even less "huff-proof, puff-proof" than his brother's because Wolfgang blows it down, too! Now that both of the boys' flimsy homes are gone, they run to the safety of Despina's house, which she has made of bricks. Wolfgang, now very, very hungry, cannot blow it down! He tries every trick he can think of to get into Despina's sturdy home, but it is no use! In the end, after their scary, hair-raising encounter with Wolfgang, Cherubino and Don Giovanni both wholeheartedly agree that Despina's idea of going to the library and reading books is a pretty smart thing to do after all.



ARTISTS



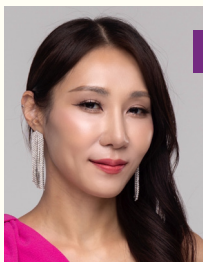
Ashley Townsley

Houston native soprano Ashley Townsley professional debuted with Houston Grand Opera's *Pieces of 9/11: Memories from Houston* world premiere. Other operatic credits include *The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cendrillon*, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, and *Così fan tutte*. In the 2025/2026 Season, Townsley debuts with The Dallas Opera in *THE LITTLE PRINCE*. In concert, Townsley has appeared with Orpheus Chamber Singers, UNT Symphony Orchestra, Lake Charles Messiah Chorus, and Louisiana Choral Foundation.



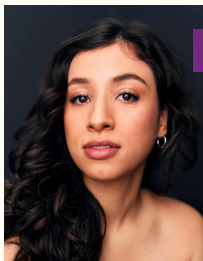
Kathryn Piña

Soprano Kathryn Piña's recent performance highlights include premiering Gloria the Pop Singer in Nathan Felix's opera *Glory Gone* and performing in "Canciones de amor," an all-Spanish-language recital. Notable roles include Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*, Red River Lyric Opera) and Pemphredo (*We've Got Our Eye on You*, Eastman School of Music). Piña has also performed Brahms' *Ein deutsches requiem*; Handel's *Messiah*; and Purcell's *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen* in concert.



Rachel Moon

Mezzo-soprano Rachel Moon's recent performances include Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*, Opera Arlington) and Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* as a Fort Worth Opera Studio Artist (2022/2023). She also covered Toy Purina (*Zorro*, Fort Worth Opera). Moon has trained with VOICEperience, Opera Naples, Miami Music Festival, Spotlight on Opera, and OperaWorks. She previously placed fourth in the London Classical Music Competition's professional voice category, and was she was a semi-finalist in Opera Mississippi's John Alexander Competition.



Karina Buruca-Kunda

Salvadoran-American mezzo-soprano Karina Buruca-Kunda has a music education bachelor's degree from Dallas Baptist University and graduate degrees from Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts. Buruca-Kunda's opera roles include Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Zita (*Gianni Schicchi*), Lucretia (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Orlovsky (*Die Fledermaus*), Ernesto (*The Billy Goats Gruff*), and Cherubino (*The Three Little Pigs*). She is currently a singer with The Dallas Opera Chorus.

ARTISTS



Dylan Elza

Upcoming appearances for tenor Dylan Elza include Gabe (*Next to Normal*, Paradox Opera), Commisario (*Il signor Bruschino*, Amelia Island Opera), and Tamino (*The Magic Flute*, Opera Arlington). Recent highlights include Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*, Opera Arlington), Giuseppe (*La traviata*, The Dallas Opera), and Harry (*The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, Paradox Opera). Elza has worked with artist programs at Florida Grand Opera, Virginia Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Santa Fe Opera, among others.



Addison Vinson

Dallas-based baritone Addison Jay Vinson studied at University of North Texas and is currently studying at Southern Methodist University. He regularly performs with ensembles like Dallas Chamber Choir, Denton Bach Society, Highland Park Chorale, and Band of Voices. Recently, he was a soloist in Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium* (Highland Park Chorale) and Handel's *Messiah* (Saint Rita's Fine Arts program). This season, Vinson performs Papageno (*The Magic Flute*) and Theater Director (*Les Mamelles de Tirésias*) with Meadows Lyric Theatre.



Travis Wiley McGuire

Travis Wiley McGuire is devoted to bringing opera to new audiences. He has sung with The Dallas Opera's Education Outreach programs since 2012, including summer concerts, singing Santa appearances, and happy-hour recitals. In schools, he's performed Wolfgang Bigbad (*The Three Little Pigs*), Osmin (*The Billy Goats Gruff*), The Trouble Man/Giant (*Jack and the Beanstalk*), and Dr. Dulcamara (*The Elixir of Love*). A regular TDO chorister since 2010, his mainstage roles include Second Philistine (*Samson and Dalila*) and the Old Servant (*Elektra*).



Brad Ritschel

Bradley Ritschel is a bass-baritone from New Jersey. Past roles include Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and the title role of *The Marriage of Figaro*. He graduated from University of Texas at Dallas as a McDermott Scholar in 2020 with a degree in electrical engineering, but he did not find the cubicle as rewarding as the stage. He is now pursuing a performer's diploma at Southern Methodist University.

thedallasopera®

presents a family performance of

THE LITTLE PRINCE

Music by Rachel Portman

Libretto by Nicholas Wright; adapted by Mary Dibbern, Ph.D.

Saturday, November 15, 2025 | Saturday, February 15, 2026

The Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House at the
The AT&T Performing Arts Center

Sung in English with Projected English Titles

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Special thanks to Danielle Georghiou

Cast

The Little Prince

Katherine Spellmon (11/15)

Julia Rose Arduino (2/15)

The Pilot

Dean Willis (11/15)

Christiön Dior Draper (2/15)

The Fox/The Rose/The Water

Yuhui Yang (11/15)

Shuyi Li (2/15)

The Vain Man/The Drunkard/Lamplighter/Snake

David Mejía, Jr. (11/15)

Jordan Hammons (2/15)

The Businessman/The King

Tres Hunter (11/15)

Lwazi Dlamini (2/15)

Creative Team

Conductor

Paolo Bressan (11/15)

Jingqi Zhu (2/15)

Director

Ryan Lescalleet

Set and Costume Designer

Tommy Bourgeois

Lighting Designer

Aaron Johansen

Wig and Make-Up Designer

Gigi Coker

Music Director

Mary Dibbern, Ph.D.

Pianist

Sara Steele

Concertmaster

Ami Campbell

Projected Titles

Mary Dibbern, Ph.D.

Touring Production Supervisor

Ryan Lescalleet

& Stage Manager

Education Touring Assistant

Katelyn Kocher

The performance will last approximately 50 minutes with no intermission

Sets built and painted by Dallas Stage Scenery.

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SYNOPSIS

By Kelley Rouke

During a terrible sandstorm, a Pilot makes a forced landing in the desert, a thousand miles from the nearest town. His plane is wrecked, and he has just enough water to last eight days. The Little Prince appears and asks the Pilot to draw a sheep. The Pilot, who was discouraged from drawing when he was young, is reluctant, but finally produces a satisfactory image.

The Prince explains that he is from a tiny planet—Asteroid B612. The planet is home to a singular Rose, which he lovingly tends. The Prince left his home to learn how he might better please the Rose. On the planets he visited previously, he met a King, a Vain Man, a Drunkard, and a Businessman, none of whom had much wisdom to offer. Finally, he met a Lamplighter who suggested he try the planet Earth.

After landing on Earth, the Prince continues his adventures. He tells of meeting the Snake, who has the power to send anyone back to his home. The Prince then found a rose garden, which was upsetting, because he had believed his Rose was unique. Next, he met a wise Fox, who explained the concept of taming: “Taming means you make a link, a lock, a sort of tie.”

The Pilot interrupts the Prince’s story to remind him they are in desperate need of water. The two set off in search of a well. They find one at sunrise and drink. The Prince tells the Pilot that he fell to Earth one year ago and instructs the Pilot to go back to his plane. The Prince summons the Snake, but the Pilot returns and frightens the Snake away. The Prince insists that he must go.



LYNNE LANE/HOUSTON GRAND OPERA

ARTISTS



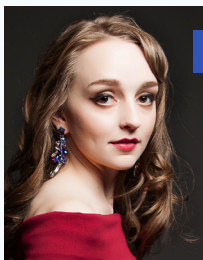
Paolo Bressan, conductor

Internationally acclaimed conductor Paolo Bressan cofounded the LacMus International Music Festival at Lake Como, Italy, and is TDO's Chorus Director and Head of Music. Bressan studied at the "Giuseppe Verdi" Conservatory of Music (Milan, Italy) and University of Music Franz Liszt (Weimar, Germany) and with celebrated Canadian pianist Louis Lortie. Bressan has worked worldwide, including at Mecklenburgische Staatstheater, Vienna's Konzerthaus, and Mariinsky Theatre and with Spanish National Orchestra, the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, and the PKF – Prague Philharmonia.



Jingqi Zhu, conductor

Jingqi Zhu is a conductor and pianist who has led professional orchestras across the US and abroad, including the MÁV Symphony Orchestra, Bodensee Philharmonie, Spokane Symphony, and Syracuse Orchestra. A Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Women Conductors Class of 2024 fellow, Zhu later served as assistant conductor and pianist for TDO's *La traviata* (2024) and CARMEN (2025) productions. In 2025, Zhu was named the inaugural Martha R. and Preston A. Peak Fellow at The Dallas Opera.



Katherine Spellmon

Soprano Katherine Spellmon grew up around the United States and Germany as a military child. Spellmon received a vocal performance bachelor's degree from University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and a vocal performance master's degree from Southern Methodist University. Her roles include Little Mary Sunshine (*Little Mary Sunshine*), Barbarina (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Laetitia (*The Old Maid and the Thief*), Angelina (*Trial by Jury*), and Despina (*Così fan tutte*).



Julia Rose Arduino

This is Julia Rose Arduino's second year with TDO's Education Outreach program. She studied at University of Houston and is currently pursuing her master's degree at TCU. She has performed Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*, TCU Opera), Cis (*Albert Herring*), and La Pastourelle (*L'enfant et les Sortilèges*). She has also sung in recital with The Puccini Society of Dallas. During TCU's 2025/2026 opera season, she reprises La Pastourelle (*L'enfant et les Sortilèges*) and portrays the Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*).

ARTISTS



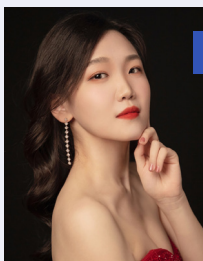
Christiön Dior Draper

Lyric baritone Christiön Dior Draper has appeared in TDO productions like *The Barber of Seville*, *The Magic Flute*, *Falstaff*, *Carmen*, *The Flying Dutchman*, and *Rigoletto*. He has also portrayed featured roles such as Daggoo in *Moby Dick* and the Sergeant in *Manon Lescaut*. In addition to opera, Draper has also performed oratorio and sacred music, like *The Messiah* and *Elijah*, and musical theater, including shows like *Ragtime*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Godspell*, and Disney's *Tarzan*.



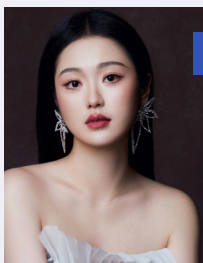
Dean Willis

Baritone Dean Willis is from Burseson, Texas. He studied at Southern Methodist University and Abilene Christian University. Willis has performed the roles of Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Dulcamara in *The Elixir of Love*, and Vertigo in *Pépito*. Willis is also the worship minister for the Pleasant Ridge Church of Christ in Arlington. He lives in Burseson with his wife, Kristen, and two children, Chloe and Camden.



Yuhui Yang

From Shanghai, soprano Yuhui Yang is a fourth-year doctoral student at University of North Texas. She also studied at Shanghai Conservatory of Music and Manhattan School of Music. Previous credits include Musetta (*La bohème*), Cupid (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*). With UNT Opera, she has performed as Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*), and Cendrillon (*Cendrillon*), amongst others. In 2023, she was Mobile Opera's Madame Rose Palmal-Tenser Scholarship Competition First Runner-up.



Shuyi Li

Beijing native Shuyi Li, soprano, is a third-year doctoral student at University of North Texas. Li also studied at Indiana University, University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, and Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music. Li has performed in *Gianni Schicchi*, *Suor Angelica*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *La rondine*, *Goblin Market*, and *King Arthur* amongst others. In the 2025/2026 Season, she presents research at Seattle's Cascade Song Festival, joins The Dallas Opera Chorus, and performs with Opera Arlington and UNT Opera.

ARTISTS



David Mejía, Jr.

From Brownsville, Texas, tenor David Mejía, Jr. studied at University of Texas at Arlington and attends Texas Christian University. Stage credits include *The Magic Flute*, *La Cenerentola*, *Susannah*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*. He's won several competitions, including the 2023 NATS National Student Auditions, Advanced Tenor-Bass category, and performed in world-premiere productions of Jared Schwartz's *Schiele in Prison* and James M. Stephenson's *Symphony No. 5*. During the 2025/2026 season, he directs a 30-minute opera with Forth Worth Opera.



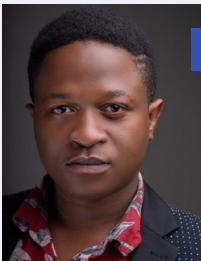
Jordan Hammons

Jordan Hammons, tenor, debuted with The Dallas Opera as the Young Servant in 2024's *Elektra* and appeared in that season's Hart Institute for Women Conductors Showcase Concert. He previously performed in TDO's *The Bremen Town Musicians* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* education productions. He also sang Princ (*Rusalka*) and Froh (*Das Rheingold*) with LAH Summer Opera Workshop. He studied at Millsaps College and Southern Methodist University, where he received the Roy and Sue Johnson Award for excellence in opera.



Tres Hunter

Tres Hunter made his international debut as a performer at Hong Kong Disneyland at the age of 22. Since then, Hunter has gone on to sing for The Dallas Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Opera Arlington, and American Baroque Opera Company, portraying both comic and dramatic roles like Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*) and Vodnik (*Rusalka*). Recently, Hunter sang with the Benedict XVI Choir in its world premiere of Frank La Rocca's "Missa Pange Lingua" in San Francisco.



Lwazi Dlamini

Born in Eswatini, baritone Lwazi Dlamini studies at Southern Methodist University. He also trained at Tshwane University of Technology and University of Cape Town. He performed as a Young Artist with Cape Town Opera. Previous roles include Baron Douphol (*La traviata*), Marco (*Gianni Schicchi*), Schaunard (*La bohème*), Rambaldo (*La rondine*), Dunlop (*Sara Baartman – The Opera*), and the Father (*The Seven Deadly Sins*). Since relocating to the US, Dlamini has performed in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, and *Carousel*.

PRODUCTION AND MUSIC STAFF (BOTH PROGRAMS)



Mary Dibbern, Music Director

Mary Dibbern, Ph.D. studied at University of Texas at Dallas and Southern Methodist University. She has served The Dallas Opera's Education and Family Program Music Director since 2012 and creates supertitles for all the TDO mainstage productions. She studied collaborative piano and was an opera coach in Paris for major European, Asian, and US companies. Dibbern later served as Minnesota Opera's Head of Music. She has extensive recital and recording credits and has written eight books on French vocal music.



Ryan Lescalleet, Stage Director

This is Ryan Lescalleet's 14th season with TDO, where he has directed *Doctor Miracle*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The Elixir of Love*, *The Billy Goats Gruff*, *Pépito*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and *The Little Prince* with TDO's Education Department. During the 2020 pandemic, Lescalleet helped conceptualize and direct virtual productions of *Doctor Miracle*, *The Bremen Town Musicians*, and *Jack and the Beanstalk*. He previously served as Undermain Theatre's company manager and AEA stage manager for multiple seasons.



Sara Steele, Pianist

Sara Steele is an active collaborative pianist and vocal coach in the Dallas area. She has won the Presser Award and the Semper Pro Musica Competition. She has been a faculty member of the Seagle and Brancaloneoni music festivals. She studied at Baylor University and Southwest Baptist University, currently studies at University of North Texas, and is a vocal coach at Texas Christian University. She is also The Dallas Opera Education Outreach program's assistant pianist and coach.

The Perot Foundation Education and Community Outreach Programs are generously supported by the following partners:

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Grace Kang Wollett
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Amy Faires
David Miles Wolcott
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Natalie Floyd
Samantha Bennett*
Inga Kroll^
Kathy Johnson^

SECOND VIOLIN

Kristin Van Cleve
Principal
Sondra Brudnak
Assistant Principal
Suneetha D'Apice
Minhee Bae
Emily Loh
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Diego Campos Medina
Yuhong Sun

VIOLA

Liesl-Ann deVilliers
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Katrina Smith
Co-Principal
Donna Hall
Paul Tullis
Colin Garner
Meghan Birmingham
Vangeli

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Mitch Maxwell
The Catherine Brackbill
Principal Cello Chair
Shawna Hamilton
Assistant Principal
Eric Forman
Vilma Peguero
Esther Seitz
Craig Leffer

BASS

William Gowen
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Michael Lelevich
Assistant Principal

Steve Brown
Kirby Nunez

FLUTE

Helen Blackburn
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Eboney Thomas

PICCOLO

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OBOE

Gina Ford
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Stewart Williams

ENGLISH HORN

Stewart Williams

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Katie Wolber
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TRUMPET

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TROMBONE

Jacob Muzquiz
The Cece and Ford
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Trombone Chair
Tony Baker
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BASS TROMBONE

Eric Swanson

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TIMPANI

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LIBRARIAN

Shannon Highland

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Amela Koci

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Lise Engel

CELESTA

Mikhail Beretsnev
Sara Steele

BASS

Scott Sheffler
P. Kellach Waddle

HORN

Clinton Webb

PERCUSSION

Brad Wagner

BANDA

Ben Gerkins

^ Substitute Musician 2025/2026 Season

* On Leave 2025/2026 Season