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THROUGH
IT

OCTOBER 3 & 4, 2026



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A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

Missoula Premiere

Music by **Zach Redler***

Libretto by **Kelley Rourke+** & **Matt Foss+**

Based on the novel by **Norman Maclean**

October 3, 7:30 PM | October 4, 3:00 PM

CAST

Norman **Schyler Vargas***

Paul **Michael Kuhn+**

Jessie **Christine Taylor Price+**

John **David Pittsinger+**

Clara **Phyllis Pancella+**

Heidi **Megan Marino+**

Neal **Ryan Bryce Johnson+**

Stage Director – **Matt Foss+**

Conductor – **Michael Sakir***

Scenic and Projection Designer – **Kristin Ellert+**

Costume and Properties Designer – **Stacy Hostetter***

Hair and Make-up Designer – **Susannah Leonardi***

Production Manager – **Markus Paminger***

Production Stage Manager – **Julius Sanchez***

Choreographer – **Abby Glanville+**

Fly-fishing Consultant – **Jason Borger+**

Missoula Rehearsal and Orchestra Pianist – **Jessica Hall***

Assistant Director – **Charlotte Mae Ellison***

Assistant Stage Manager – **Alicia Barott***

Video Operator – **Rick Talbott***

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Jean Maclean Snyder and John N. Maclean

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With funding from
Carol Glenn & Sal Lalani
Drs. Dennis & Anne Wentz
Ron Lerner, "in loving memory of my wife, Jane"

Video footage courtesy of
Montana PBS | Cinematography
by Scott Sterling

+ Opera Montana debut

* Alumnus, Opera Montana

Synopsis

PRELUDE: Led by Reverend John Maclean and his wife, Clara, the ensemble gathers to set the stage with themes that will echo through the unfolding story (“In the Beginning”).

SCENE ONE: Wolf Creek, Montana, summer of 1937. Jessie and Norman Maclean, a newly married couple, begin their morning together over coffee. Jessie asks Norman if he’s seen his brother, Paul, lately, and Norman shrugs off the question, replying that he sees his brother’s byline every day. Jessie comes to the point: her brother, Neal, is coming home for a visit, and she is concerned that Neal is losing touch with his roots, and with himself. She would like Norman and Paul to take Neal fishing. Norman makes it clear that he and his brother do not like Neal, who does not live up to Maclean standards of manhood (“A Montana Man”). According to the Maclean family code, Norman says, when you see a fight coming, it’s always best to get in the first punch. Jessie counters with a memory of her father—a self-made man who taught dancing lessons on the side and was known for his generosity (“All Kinds of Men”). Before Norman can respond, the phone rings. It is the desk sergeant at the local jail, calling Norman to pick up Paul.

SCENE TWO: When Norman arrives at the jail, Paul assures his brother that the arrest was a misunderstanding and suggests they go fishing. It is the brothers’ first time fishing together in a while, and as they make preparations, they affectionately recall their father’s strict lessons in fly-fishing (Trio: “Fishing Catechism”). Norman still follows his father’s rule, but Paul’s style has evolved and become more intuitive (Duet: “A Big Fish”). Norman marvels at his brother’s artistry (“Beautiful”). Norman mentions the fishing trip with Neal; Paul is disgusted, but eventually agrees to participate. When Norman brings up Paul’s arrest, Paul quickly changes the subject, telling a story (“Racing a Rabbit”) that ends with a smashed-up car.

SCENE THREE: The next day, Neal arrives and quickly drags Norman and Paul to Black Jack’s Bar, where the evening is in full swing (Ensemble: “3-7-77”). Neal attempts to win over the locals with tales of his hunting prowess (“Neal’s Tale”), but a lady the locals call Rawhide (“Too Much”) quickly pokes holes in his story. Neal and Paul excuse themselves as Heidi’s demeanor turns from suspicious to romantic.

SCENE FOUR: The next morning, Norman wakes before anyone else and reflects on recent events, from his brother’s arrest to his story about racing rabbits (“Luminous”). Jessie’s arrival rescues him from his thoughts and the two share a moment (“Funny”). Paul hustles everyone out; as the three men head for the river, Jessie reminds Norman to look after her brother.

SCENE FIVE: At the river, as Norman and Paul stash beers in the river for the end of the day, Heidi surprises the three men and quickly takes Neal away to “a good spot” she knows. Alone together on the river, all four are lost in their thoughts—nostalgia, attraction, worry, wonder (“Something Close to Love”). Paul mentions leaving Montana and his troubles behind, but then quickly walks the statement back. As they fish,

Paul's singular style reveals itself once again, and he offers another window into his philosophy of life. Norman asks if Paul needs help, pushing harder this time; Paul rebuffs him, but nonetheless finds a cryptic way to express gratitude for his brother's concern. When the brothers go to retrieve their beer, it is gone. Looking out to a distant sandbar, they see Rawhide and Neal, naked and passed out in the blistering sun.

SCENE SIX: By the time the men return to Norman's home, news of Rawhide and Neal is all over town and Jessie is furious. Jessie and Norman argue, then sing of the difficulty—and necessity—of helping those who are hardest to help ("No Greater Need"). They agree to never get out of touch with each other. A phone rings and interrupts the moment. It is for Paul, who is shaken by the brief exchange, but quickly changes the subject, suggesting a family fishing trip with their father.

SCENE SEVEN: The next morning, at the Maclean home in Missoula, Clara is the first one up. She reflects on the differences between her two boys and the difficulty of helping ("Help is Hard"). John begins trying to gather his fishing supplies; as he scurries anxiously, Clara is the calm center, reminding her husband where to look for items before he can even ask. John expresses some doubt about his aging body's capacity for fishing, but his family reassures him.

SCENE EIGHT: At the river, the men share a memory ("Do You Remember"), before separating to fish. John ponders the spiritual aspect of fishing ("A Spot of Time"). For once, Norman is having better luck than Paul and is able to offer help in the form of a fly. Paul's luck quickly changes and the other two marvel at his artistry. John talks with Norman ("Words and Water") as they wait for Paul to finish. The three men speak of what the time on the river means to them ("A Spot of Time: Reprise"). As the day ends, Paul remarks that in three more years, he will know how to think like a fish.

SCENE NINE: In Norman and Jessie's kitchen, the phone rings again. Norman answers and learns that Paul's body has been found in an alley, beaten to death with the butt of a revolver. All of the bones in his right hand were broken, indicating that Paul likely "got in the first punch." Family members converge to grapple with the loss, then are joined by the full ensemble for the finale ("Eventually").

RUNNING TIME: 1 hour 30 minutes

There will be no intermission

Susan Miller & Matt Rognlie

General Director & President of Opera Montana

Dear Friends,

We sit here with you tonight feeling a mixture of humility, pride, gratitude, and a healthy dose of anxiety. When we received the rights to adapt Mr. Maclean's novella into an opera just a little under two years ago, we were a different company. We knew it was the right thing to do, but we had never done anything like this before. Could we actually do this?

Time would tell. We began by assembling a crackerjack creative team, and shortly thereafter held auditions, putting together a cast of brilliant singer-actors. (Spoiler alert: they're as kind as they are talented.) Like Clara and John must have felt about their two boys, as producers, we feel so proud of this team.

From workshop to workshop to workshop to workshop, the piece was honed and enriched. Our community of supporters backed this new idea along with our other campaign priorities: Inspiring New Audiences and Creating a Sustainable Opera Montana with their checkbooks. We haven't quite yet reached our \$2.5M fundraising goal yet, but we're so close. Thank you to everyone who has hosted an artist, written a check, loaned a vehicle, or prepared food for our people. We couldn't do it without you.

And now it's the World Premiere run of *A River Runs Through It*. You, the audience, are the finishing touch. As we wait with bated breath for your reactions, we realize that between humility, pride, gratitude, and anxiety, we just feel overwhelmingly thankful that we sit with you in this theatre tonight. To the native Montanans in the room, we hope we did you proud. To the Macleans in the room, we hope we did you *really* proud.

Enjoy the show,

Susan Miller & Matt Rognlie



Michael Sakir

Artistic Director

Dear Friends,

A River Runs Through It is not just Montana's state novel. It is a work of staggering universal truth and beauty. Commissioning, developing, and premiering it on the opera stage has been a big responsibility. I want to thank the Missoula Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Julia Tai for their faith and friendship in bringing this timeless story back to where it all took place nearly a century ago.

Julia Tai and I have been friends for over 20 years now. We met at the International Conducting Festival and Workshop in the Czech Republic. I could tell then not only what a stellar conductor and musician Julia was, but what a kind and open-hearted person she was and remains today. Missoula is a very lucky place to call her their own.



Bringing to life this new opera required a dream team of creative minds. That is exactly what Opera Montana found with composer Zach Redler and co-librettists Kelley Rourke and Matt Foss. They have distilled the novella's poetry and sincerity while also giving the story a fresh voice. And our stellar cast – an onstage family that quickly became a family offstage too – has provided their incredible talent, joyful spirits, and passionate dedication to this project. Coupled with our brilliant designers and hardworking production team, bringing *A River Runs Through It* to the opera stage has been a dream fulfilled.

Just as Montana is proud of its state novel, so too can Montanans be proud of their new state opera. *A River Runs Through It* has put Montana on the international opera map. And it has reinforced Opera Montana's mission to create community through world-class song and storytelling.

Thank you to the hundreds of people who have helped bring this new opera to life.

Sincerely,

Michael Sakir
Artistic Director
Opera Montana

Artist Profiles

Schyler Vargas

Norman



Denver, CO

First Opera Montana Production: *María de Buenos Aires* (2024)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Raoul, *Masquerade*, Off-Broadway

Slim, *Of Mice and Men*, Lyric Opera of Kansas City

Sir Harry, *Once Upon a Mattress*, Central City Opera

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Fred, *A Christmas Carol*, Paramount Theatre Chicago

Soldier/George (u/s), *Sunday in the Park with George*, Paramount Theatre Chicago

Frank Schultz, *Show Boat*, Houston Grand Opera

Michael Kuhn

Paul



New York, NY

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Ensemble/Pirelli Understudy, *Sweeney Todd*, Broadway (2023 Revival)

Police Buddy, *Blue*, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center

Dimitri, *Ever After*, Phoenix Theatre Company

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Swing, *Masquerade (The Phantom of the Opera)*, Off-Broadway

Christine Taylor Price

Jessie



Tulsa, OK

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Eliza Doolittle, *My Fair Lady*, Opera Saratoga
Lillian Holiday, *Happy End*, Glimmerglass
Festival/Opera Saratoga Tour
Soloist, *Sondheim/Poulenc*, Recital with New
York Festival of Song

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Soloist, *First Name Basis*, Recital with New
York Festival of Song
Lillian Holiday, *Happy End*, Glimmerglass
Festival/Opera Saratoga Tour Continued

David Pittsinger

John



OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Walton, *I Puritani*, Metropolitan Opera (HD)
Tiresias, *Oedipus Rex*, Houston Symphony
Emile De Becque, *South Pacific*, Broadway
LCT, Kennedy Ctr (Helen Hayes Nomination)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Soloist, *Messiah*, Residency Nat' Sawdust
Theatre, Handel on The Hudson/Ruckus
King, *Deidamia*, Ruckus/Handel on the
Hudson
Sprecher, *Die Zauberflöte*, Cincinnati Opera
(Opposite son Richard)

Phyllis Pancella

Clara



Winston-Salem, NC

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Carmen, *Carmen*, Houston Grand Opera, English National Opera, Teatro San Carlo
Mrs. Lovett, *Sweeney Todd*, Opera Colorado, Virginia Opera

Lizzie Borden, *Lizzie Borden*, Glimmerglass Opera, New York City Opera, PBS Live from Lincoln Center

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Voice faculty and Area Coordinator, University of North Carolina School of the Arts
The Deepest Desire by Jake Heggie, Piedmont Opera 50th Anniversary Celebration, Wake Forest University
Guest Faculty, American Institute of Musical Studies, Graz, Austria

Megan Marino

Heidi



Creede, CO

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Sonia, *The Dialogue of Memories* (Cipullo), Music of Remembrance

Olga, Eugene Onegin, Canadian Opera Company

Maffio Orsini, *Lucrezia Borgia*, Opera Baltimore

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Dinah, *Trouble in Tahiti*, Austin Symphony
Golde, *Fiddler on the Roof*, Detroit Opera
Annina, *Der Rosenkavalier*, Houston Grand Opera

Ryan Bryce Johnson

Neal



Muleshoe, TX

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Tanzmeister, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Merola Opera

Borsa, *Rigoletto*, Santa Fe Opera

Lt. Joseph Cable, *South Pacific*, Dayton Opera

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Tenor Soloist, *Messiah*, St. Luke's Church Atlanta

Production Profiles

Zach Redler – Composer

Dublin, NH

First Opera Montana Production: *The Falling and The Rising* (2022)

PAST PERFORMANCES

The Falling and The Rising, Brevard Music Center
Brevard, NC July '26

Mr. Brown, 92nd St. Y New York, NY April '26

Neilson's View, Neilson Amphitheatre Dublin, NH
September '25

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

The Falling and The Rising, Pensacola Opera Nov '26

The Falling and The Rising, Opera San Antonio Feb '27

TRANSLATION (premiere), Seattle Opera Fall '27

Thanks to Opera Montana for giving me the

opportunity to help tell this story. Gratitude to my amazing collaborators and the cast and crew. Love to my parents, my partner Brittney, and children Sky and Ellis.



Kelley Rourke - Co-Librettist

Roseboom/Brooklyn, NY

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Librettist, *Eat the Document*, PROTOTYPE Festival

Librettist, *Cinderella*, Opera Australia

Librettist, *Così*, The Glimmerglass Festival

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

New English book, *Happy End*, Merkin Concert Hall, NYC

Librettist, *O'Keeffe: Kiss the Sky*, Washington National Opera

Librettist, dramatic song cycle with composer Damien Geter



Matt Foss - Co-Librettist / Stage Director

Toledo, OH

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Adapter / Director, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Red Tape Theatre Chicago, IL

Adapter / Director, *The Jungle*, Oracle Theatre Chicago, IL

Actor, Director, Writer, Various, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Writer/Actor, *Lone Wolves*, Feature Film Now Streaming

Writer, *Method*, Feature Film

The Lonely Polar Bear, World Premiere, Chicago/Toledo with Disability Theatre Ensemble



Michael Sakir - Conductor

Bozeman, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *Daughter of the Regiment* (2016)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Time To Act (World Premiere), Pittsburgh Opera

L'elisir d'amore, Manhattan School of Music

Tosca, Opera Montana

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Working for the Macbeths (World Premiere), Pittsburgh Opera

Carmen, Opera Montana



Kristin Ellert – *Scenic and Projections Designer*

Toledo, OH

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

The Milwaukee Rep, First Stage, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse

Guest artist, Southern Utah University, Ohio Northern University, Illinois Wesleyan University, University of Findlay, and University of Toledo

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Scenic Design, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas, The Musical*, First Stage Milwaukee

Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre-Design at Eastern Michigan University



Stacy Hosteller – *Costume and Properties Designer*

Bozeman, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *The Falling and the Rising* (2022)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Artistic Director/Resident Playwright, 300+ Productions, Kaleidoscope Theater 2000–2019

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Properties Designer/Artist Craftsperson, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks 2002–current

Costume Designer, The Ellen Theatre/Montana TheatreWorks 2019–current



Susannah Leonardi – *Hair and Make-up Designer*

Manhattan, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *Hansel & Gretel* (2025)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Performer, Hair/Wig Designer, *Fiddler on the Roof*, Montana TheatreWorks

Hair & Make-up Designer, *Cinderella*, Opera Montana

Hair & Make-up Designer, *Ragtime*, Opera Montana

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Salon Owner, Hairstylist & Permanent Makeup Artist and Member of Montana Board of Barbers and Cosmetology.



Markus Paminger – Production Manager

Missoula, MT

First Opera Montana Appearance:
The Falling and the Rising (2022)



Julius Sanchez – Production Stage Manager

First Opera Montana Production: *Hansel & Gretel* (2025)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Curtis Institute of Music
La traviata, Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera
Tristan und Isolde, The Philadelphia Orchestra

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Susannah, Curtis Institute of Music
Tosca, Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera
Pelléas et Mélisande, Curtis Institute of Music



Abby Glanville – Choreographer

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Choreographer, *Method*, Feature Film
Choreographer, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (World Premiere Musical), University of Toledo/Toledo Disability Theatre Ensemble
Choreographer, *The Jungle*, Kennedy Center Award – Certificate of Merit

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Choreographer, *The Lonely Polar Bear* (World Premiere)



Jason Borger – Fly-fishing Consultant

OPERA MONTANA DEBUT

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Videographer, director, editor, angler, presenter, fly-fishing educator

Fly-fishing talent, *The River Why*, Feature Film

Fly-fishing double (Brad Pitt), *A River Runs Through It*, Feature Film

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Media production and fly fishing, melding them when he can. Visit jborgerflyfishing.com



Jessica Hall – Rehearsal and Missoula Pit Pianist

Tacoma, WA

First Opera Montana appearance: *The Falling and the Rising* (2022)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Rehearsal pianist, *Hänsel and Gretel*, Vashon Opera

Rehearsal pianist, *Falstaff*, Vashon Opera

Orchestral pianist, *The Falling and the Rising*, Seattle Opera

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Rehearsal pianist, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Vashon Opera

Rehearsal pianist, *The Crucible*, Vashon Opera



Charlotte Mac Ellison – Assistant Director

Bozeman, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *María de Buenos Aires* (2024)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Nina, *The Seagull*, Bozeman Actor's Theatre

Meg, *Little Women*, Bozeman Actor's Theatre

Costume Designer, *Collaborate & Listen*, Independent Web Series

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Dialect Coach, *All is Calm*, Bozeman Actor's Theatre

Maggie Locke, *Christmas in Big Sky Country*, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks

Assistant Director / Dialect Coach, *Once*, Opera Montana



Alicia Baroll – Assistant Stage Manager

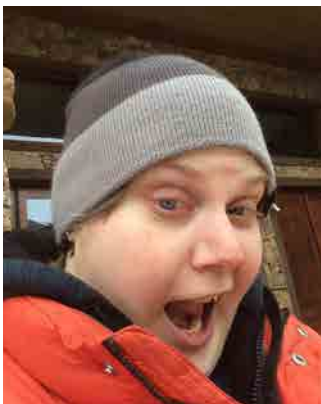
Mapleton, MN

First Opera Montana Production: *Sweeney Todd* (2025)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS:

Assistant Stage Manager, *Sweeney Todd*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *Ragtime*, *Tosca*, Opera Montana

Assistant Stage Manager, *A Christmas Carol*, *Mary Poppins*, *Annie*, *Music Man*, Montana TheatreWorks



Rick Talbott – Video Operator

Bozeman, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *Tosca* (1999)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

28th consecutive appearance with Opera Montana



Cover Cast Profiles

Lukas Graf – Norman, Cover

Bozeman, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *Il Trovatore* (1996)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Rapunzel's Prince, *Into the Woods*, Opera Montana Jumper, *The Falling and the Rising*, Opera Montana Father, *Ragtime*, Opera Montana

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

El Dan Caïro, *Carmen*, Opera Montana



Jeff Killo – Paul, Cover

Bozeman, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *La Bohème* (1995)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Cavaradossi, *Tosca*, Rimrock Opera

Don Jose, *Carmen*, Mendocino Summer Festival
Opera

Manus Duggan, *No Greater Love*, Butte Granite
Mountain Mine Commemoration



Caitlin Cisler – Jessie, Cover

Missoula, MT

First Opera Montana Appearance: *HMS Pinafore*
(2014)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Fairy Godmother, *Cinderella*, Opera Montana

Soloist, *Bachianas Brasileiras*, Missoula Chamber
Music Collective

Königin der Nacht, *Die Zauberflöte*, Madison Opera

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Soloist, *Medusa* by Jocelyn Hagen, University of
Montana Symphonic Wind Ensemble



Daren Small – John, Cover

Billings, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *Die Zauberflöte*
(2007)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Colline, *La Bohème*, Rimrock Opera

Seneca, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Opera Montana

Sarastro, *Die Zauberflöte*, Rimrock Opera

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Vocal Soloist, Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*,
Bozeman, MT

Bass Soloist, Handel's *Messiah*, Glacier Symphony

Leporello, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Rimrock Opera



Emily Thrasher - Clara, Cover

Aurora, CO

First Opera Montana Production: *Suor Angelica* (2015)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Jack's Mother, *Into the Woods*, Opera Montana

Miss Andrew, *Mary Poppins*, Montana TheatreWorks

Giovanna, *Rigoletto*, Opera Montana

Mme. Firmin, *Phantom: The Las Vegas Spectacular*

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Chorus, *Carmen*, Opera Montana

Private Voice Studio, Music Villa



Annabella Joy - Heidi, Cover

Bozeman, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *Sweeney Todd* (2025)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Laura Wingfield, *The Glass Menagerie*, Montana Theatre Works

Ensemble Creator/Musician, *Strange Mating Calls*, Nervous Theatre

Ado Annie, *Oklahoma!*, Montana TheatreWorks



David Warner - Neil, Cover

Three Forks, MT

First Opera Montana Production: *Sweeney Todd* (2024)

PAST ENGAGEMENTS

Beadle, *Sweeney Todd*, Opera Montana

Trinquet, *Eugene Onegin*, Portland Opera

Gastone, *La Traviata*, Portland Opera



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Leslie Collins-Rose

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Michael Videon

LIBRARIAN

Suzanne Hartzell

PERSONNEL MANAGER

Jason Bell

STAGE MANAGER

Olivia Adams

*Members of the string sections
are listed alphabetically. Seating
is rotated for each concert.

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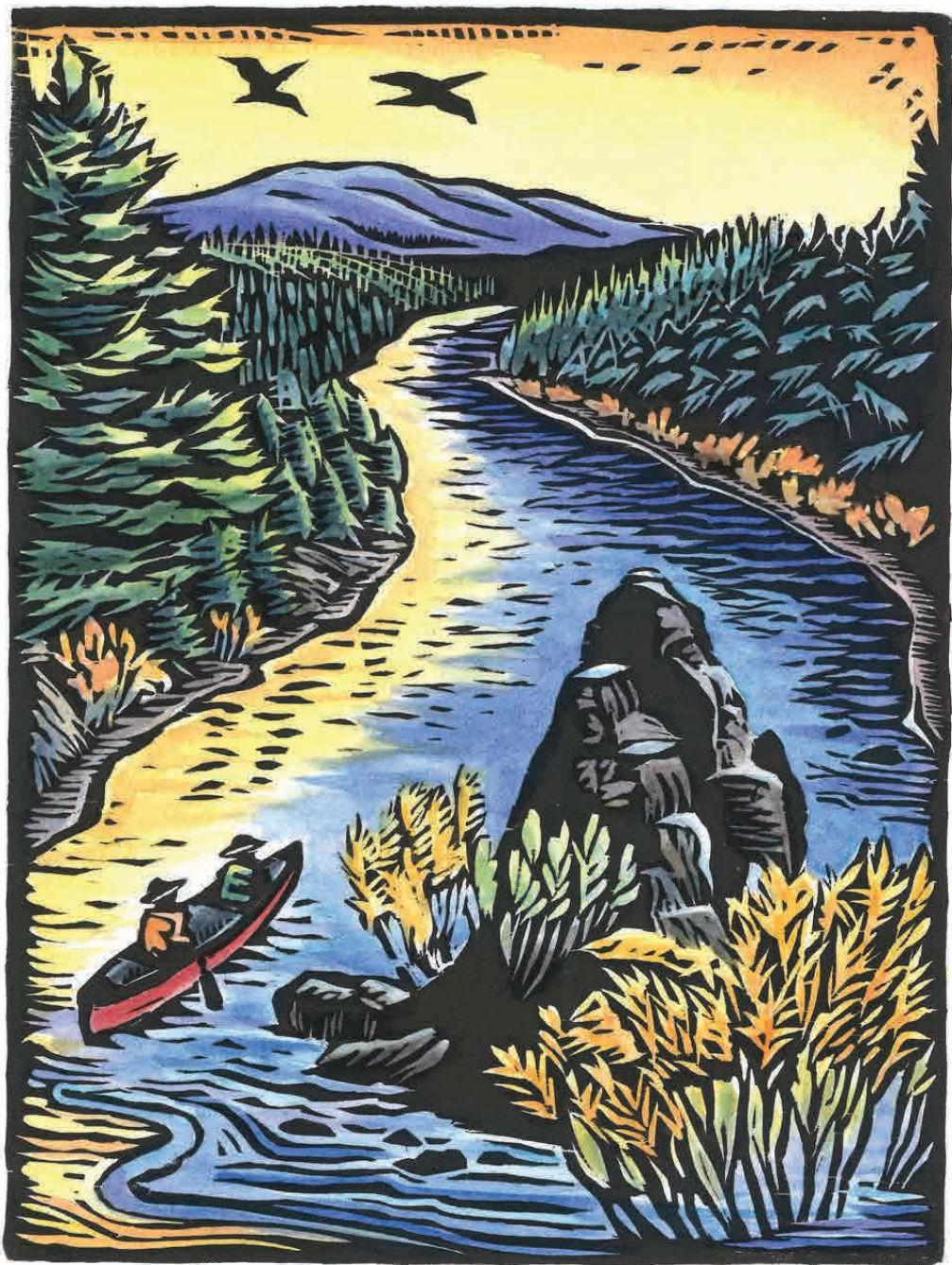
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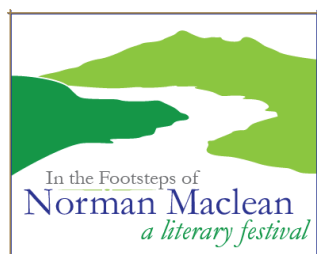
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EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For more than 40 years, education and community engagement have been at the heart of the Missoula Symphony Association's mission. That commitment has grown steadily under the stewardship of Music Director, Julia Tai. This season the Missoula Symphony Association is proud to present the following programs throughout the region:

SYMPHONY KIDS AT THE MISSOULA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Julia Tai presents a series of four mini concerts that help children explore the elements of music and the instruments of the orchestra. These engaging and hands-on programs feature Symphony musicians and guest artists.

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM AT THE MISSOULA PUBLIC LIBRARY IMAGINARIUM

Saturday, September 19, 2026 | Saturday, October 17, 2026

Saturday, March 6, 2027 | Saturday, April 17, 2027

BRANCH LIBRARY CONCERTS

Small ensembles of Symphony members perform mini-concerts in Missoula County's rural communities during the summer months.

STUDENT NIGHT AT DRESS REHEARSAL

Students and families are invited to join the Symphony for the dress rehearsal preceding each Masterworks Concert, enhanced by educational materials and a short talk by Music Director, Julia Tai.

7:00 PM – 10:00 PM AT THE DENNISON THEATRE

Friday, September 18, 2026 | Friday, October 23, 2026

Friday, March 5, 2027 | Friday, April 16, 2027

DOWNBEAT LOWDOWN

A free pre-concert talk before each of our Masterworks concerts with Music Director, Julia Tai.

SYMPHONY IN THE SCHOOLS

Symphony musicians visit Missoula-area middle schools and high schools to perform and coach music students.

MISSOULA YOUTH SYMPHONY SIDE-BY-SIDE

Music Director, Julia Tai works with the Missoula Youth Symphony during their rehearsals, and members of MYS perform alongside the Missoula Symphony in a Masterworks concert.

For more information, visit missoulasympphony.org/education



Service Through Music

Opera Montana creates and inspires community and collaboration through world class opera, musical theatre, and educational engagement. We want to become known as a company that creates great art *while serving the community*. And how better for us to serve the community than through what we're best at - vocal music? Here are just a few ways of how we live that mission every year.

The Opera Montana Veterans Chorus

When we produced Zach Redler and Jerre Dye's *The Falling and the Rising* in 2022, we were fortunate to get to cast a local military chorus to sing a stirring anthem at the end of the show. The show eventually ended, but we couldn't let the relationships end with it.

A year later, the Opera Montana Veterans Chorus was formed to celebrate service through song and to create connections among many generations of veterans. Since their formation, the chorus has performed during parades, during MSU's military appreciation games, and even during a preshow at Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. Last season alone, the Veterans Chorus reached nearly 8,000 people during their performances.

One benefit of the Veterans Chorus is the option of free voice lessons with a local teacher. Several members have taken advantage of this benefit, honing their skills for their own personal benefit and for the greater good of the chorus.

This season, the Opera Montana Veterans Chorus will perform in their biggest concert to date! Hear them join forces with Belgrade's Second String Orchestra and a community choir to perform, *O Man Greatly Beloved* at Hope Lutheran Church on Thursday, November 5. The concert is free to the public, and any donations collected will support a local Veteran Service Organization.



Wheels of Harmony

Wheels of Harmony (WOH) is Opera Montana's school tour that features Indigenous music and culture. Entering its fifth season this fall, WOH travels to mostly rural and underserved schools in Montana. Artists share traditional music from their respective Tribes, western opera and musical theatre, and new music by Indigenous composers. Last year, the tour reached over 3,600 students!

In response to a request from both the artists and the students, this year, we're investing in a longer-term relationship with students from Lame Deer Junior High on the Northern Cheyenne reservation. A group of students will travel to Bozeman to attend *A River Runs Through It* and speak with the composer, Zach Redler about his work. Then, between November 10-12, Wheels of Harmony artists will conduct a three-day residency in the same students' classrooms. They will work together on composition - words and music with Wheels artists and former Montana poet laureate, Tami Haaland. The Lame Deer residency will complement our regular season of one-day visits to other rural and Tribal schools and communities around the state.

If you live in Bozeman and would like to see Wheels of Harmony for yourself, please check us out at XY Planning Network on Friday, November 13. The concert is free to the public.



Youth Opera Program

The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now. The same philosophy holds true for Opera Montana's nascent Youth Opera Program. Beginning in September, young people in grades 6-9 will meet weekly with youth chorus director, Jessica Graf. There, they'll receive foundational music education and performance opportunities. Additionally, they'll receive a master class from one of Opera Montana's incredible guest artists. This fall, that guest artist is Julliard graduate, Kate Morton, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. Kate will have just concluded touring with Wheels of Harmony. She spent her summer playing Ado Annie in Francesca Zambello's Glimmerglass production of *Oklahoma!* An avid participant in Youth Choir programs herself, Kate is an example of how starting young can pay dividends in the long run for young singers.

Registration for the Youth Opera Program's spring semester is open now! Semester-long participation costs \$400/student, but discounts are available for siblings. Scholarships are also available for qualifying applicants. For questions, please contact Education Director, Emerald Hart-Ullman at emerald@operamontana.org

Many thanks to the M.J. Murdock Charitable Foundation for their support of the Education Director position and the Youth Opera Program start up costs!

**More information about all of our programs can be found at
OperaMontana.org**

Missoula Symphony Scholarship Fund

Continuing the grand tradition of the Missoula Symphony Guild, the Missoula Symphony Scholarship Fund is dedicated to providing scholarships for outstanding University of Montana music students who play in the Missoula Symphony Orchestra or sing in the Missoula Symphony Chorale.

This year, the Missoula Symphony Association will award more than \$35,000 in scholarships to ten talented young musicians. This important commitment is made possible through the generosity of the individuals listed below, whose support directly funds these scholarships. Our 2026–2027 scholarship recipients are noted on the Orchestra Roster with a “+” sign.

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Cook Family Scholarship

Established in 2020–2021, this scholarship is named for Will and Kay Cook. “We are happy to partner with the University of Montana and The Missoula Symphony Association to support the growth of music education in Montana and the cultural enrichment of our city.” 2026–2027 Recipients: AJ Frisque, string bass, Zoe McLain, violin, Lindsay Abelin, viola, Neveah Killsnight, viola, Riley Fallsdown, cello.

The Florence Reynolds Scholarship

Named for a woman who shared her musical talent, enthusiasm and endless energy with the MSA for many years. Recipient: Makenzie Grotbo, violin.

The Symphony Guild Presidents’ Scholarship

Named in honor of those women who have given their time and energy as Presidents of the Missoula Symphony Guild. Recipient: Garon Jones, string bass.

The Joseph Henry Scholarship

Named in honor of our Music Director Emeritus, who retired in 2007 after 21 years as Music Director of the Missoula Symphony Orchestra. Recipient: Hayley Bouchard, cello.

The Donald Carey Scholarship

Named in honor of our former Chorale Director who retired in 2006, after 18 years at his post. Recipient: Seth Griffith, cello.

The Virginia Vinal Scholarship

Named in honor of the longest-serving member of the orchestra, and her dedication to music and community. Recipient: Moe Kobold, violin.

The Lorraine Andrie Prize

Not a scholarship but a cash award, this prize is presented at the final concert of each season to a U.M. graduating senior who is deemed a truly outstanding and dedicated orchestra member. Named in honor of the founding leader of the Guild. Recipient: William (Danger) Gersh, percussion.

The Steve and Jane Bahls Scholarship

Established by Steve and Jane Bahls in 2023. The Steve and Jane Bahls scholarship recognizes an outstanding music student who performs in the Missoula Symphony Orchestra or in the Missoula Symphony Chorale. Recipient: Maxim Kolberg.

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The University of Montana's Dennison Theatre and School of Music are proud to serve as home to the Missoula Symphony Orchestra & Chorale. This dynamic partnership between our organizations delivers professional musical opportunities to our students and provides engaging musical experiences for the Missoula community.

