



Opera
Maine

PAUL'S CASE

MUSIC BY
Gregory Spears

LIBRETTO BY
Gregory Spears
AND Kathryn Walat

CONDUCTOR
Lance Inouye

DIRECTOR
Richard Gammon

June 28, 7:30 p.m.

June 29, 2:30 p.m.

Stevens Square Theater, Portland

OperaMaine.org

\$35 | Age 21 and under free

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Opera Maine

Dona D. Vaughn, Artistic Director

CREATIVE TEAM

Artistic Director:
Dona D. Vaughn

**Conductor/Music
Director:**
Lance Inouye

Director:
Richard Gammon

Lighting Designer:
Jamie Grant

**Co-Projection
Designers:**
Yuki Izumihara
SeifAllah Salotto-Cristobal

Stage Manager:
Stacey Salotto-Cristobal

Dramaturg:
Calien Lewis

**Assistant
Stage Manager:**
Bailey Baldwin

Supertitle Operator:
Ocean Robbins

WELCOME!

Thank you for joining us for Paul's Case, a deeply moving chamber opera that brings Willa Cather's iconic short story to life with poignant lyricism and striking intimacy. Composer Gregory Spears and librettist Kathryn Walat have crafted a hauntingly beautiful score that captures the emotional complexity of Paul—a young man desperate to escape the confines of his world and live among beauty, art, and glamour.

This opera challenges us to reflect on the cost of that yearning, the limits of belonging, and the fine line between illusion and truth. With its atmospheric music and powerful storytelling, Paul's Case is unlike any opera we've presented before—subtle, spare, and devastating.

Producing this work reflects Opera Maine's commitment to presenting bold, emotionally resonant works that expand the operatic experience while connecting us to timeless human struggles. We are proud to share it with you.

Enjoy the performance and thank you for supporting opera that dares to feel this deeply.

- Dona D. Vaughn
Artistic Director

PAUL'S CASE

Composed by Gregory Spears

Libretto by Kathryn Walat and Gregory Spears

Opera in 2 acts based on the short story "Paul's Case" by Willa Cather

SYNOPSIS

Act I Setting: Pittsburgh—1906

Scene One: Paul is seated in front of three teachers and the high school principal to appeal his suspension. Paul stammers out the refrain "I do not mean to be polite, or impolite either." The teachers are infuriated by his dandyish behavior and appearance, epitomized by the red carnation he wears. Paul is eventually dismissed. He bows gracefully and exits.

Scene Two: Later that evening Paul's father is calculating figures at his desk while Paul is changing into an usher's uniform at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Music Hall. The father describes his son's disdain for middle-class values while Paul tells of his love for all things exotic and theatrical. Unexpectedly, Paul's English teacher arrives at the hall with two tickets given to her by a rich steel magnate. Paul reluctantly guides her to her seat. While waiting for the show to begin, the English teacher recounts a life full of disappointments. The show begins and two opera singers take the stage. Paul and the English teacher are enchanted. Paul's father, still simmering at home, warns that on account of his recent suspension from school this will be Paul's last night working at the theater.

Scene Three: Paul's father has removed Paul from school and the theater and sent him to work as a cashboy clerk. Distraught, Paul describes his contempt for the banalities of work-a-day life in Pittsburgh. He decides to steal the firm's weekend deposit and catches the next train New York.

INTERMISSION

Act II Setting: New York City—1906

Scene Four: Three hotel maids prepare a sumptuous suite at the Waldorf Astoria. Paul enters triumphantly and sings of his arrival in New York on the train. He smugly catalogs his purchases from an afternoon shopping spree. Paul then bathes and takes his dinner in the Waldorf's dining room. There he encounters a Yale freshman down for a weekend visit, and the two join up for a drunken night on the town. Paul wakes the next afternoon hungover. He summons for the Pittsburgh newspapers in which the maids read of his theft. Paul discovers that he has been spotted at a New York hotel and that his father is coming to take him back home. He then unwraps his final purchase, a shiny revolver, and contemplates his final actions. After putting the revolver away, he heads for the Newark train yard. Scene Five: After arriving on an embankment overlooking railroad tracks, Paul buries a red carnation in the snow. He falls asleep and is later awakened by a distant train whistle. As the locomotive approaches, he leaps in front of it. Paul's teachers and father lament Paul's death as he dissolves into the landscape.

CAST

James Stevens, Paul

Daniel Illig, Paul's Father

Siyi Yan, History Teacher, Opera Soprano I, Maid I

Alison Kessler, Drawing Teacher, Opera Soprano II, Maid II

Deirdre Lahiff, English Teacher, Maid III

Jack Hicks, Yale Freshman

Oluwagbemiga David Oluwo, Principal

Evgenia Truksha, pianist

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

Gregory Spears is a New York-based composer whose music has been called "astonishingly beautiful" (The New York Times), "coolly entrancing" (The New Yorker), and "some of the most beautifully unsettling music to appear in recent memory" (The Boston Globe). He has been commissioned by The New York Philharmonic, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Seraphic Fire, The Crossing, Volti, BMI/Concert Artists Guild, Vocal Arts DC, New York Polyphony, The New York International Piano Competition, the JACK Quartet, and The New York Youth Symphony among others.

He holds degrees in composition from Eastman School of Music, Yale School of Music, and Princeton. He also studied as a Fulbright Scholar at the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen with Hans Abrahamsen. He currently teaches composition and orchestration at Purchase College Conservatory (SUNY). His music is published by Schott Music and Schott PSNY.

Paul's Case is Spears' first opera and was well received by audiences and critics alike. It was developed by American Opera Projects and premiered by Urban Arias in 2013. The opera was restaged at the Prototype Festival in New York and presented in a new production by Pittsburgh Opera in 2014.

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BIOS – CREATIVE TEAM

LANCE INOUE, Conductor

Japanese American conductor, originally from Honolulu, Lance Inouye is based in Portland, Oregon where he is Artistic Director/Conductor of the Willamette Valley Symphony, and Director of Orchestral Activities at Lewis & Clark College. Inouye's diverse career has led to engagements with Portland Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Sarasota Opera, Hawai'i Opera Theatre, and orchestras across the U.S. and abroad. Inouye was previously Conducting Assistant with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and has guest conducted the Naples Philharmonic, Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra, Walla Walla Symphony, and in Russia, the St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra "Klassika," Karelia Philharmonic, Sochi Symphony Orchestra, and the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic of which he served as Associate Conductor for three seasons. Active as a guest lecturer and conductor, he has recently given masterclasses at Mahidol University College of Music in Bangkok, Thailand and at the Instituto de Formación Integral Coro y Orquesta Urubichá in Bolivia where he premiered the music of Chilean composer Freddy Vilches. Inouye has been a prizewinner at conducting competitions throughout Europe, most notably receiving 2nd prize in the Makris International Conducting Competition in Belgrade, Serbia. Inouye studied at the Aspen Music Festival, received his DMA degree in orchestral conducting from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and completed his post-graduate studies in Russia at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory. Next season, Inouye will conduct the world premiere of *Kamalehua: The Sheltering Tree*, the first fully professional opera sung in the Hawaiian language, commissioned by Hawai'i Opera Theatre starring baritone Quinn Kelsey.

RICHARD GAMMON, Director

Richard Gammon, a Filipino American stage director's productions include: *Der Kaiser von Atlantis; L'île de Merlin* (Wolf Trap Opera); Gianni Schicchi; *Buoso's Ghost* (Detroit Opera); the world premiere of Tsui/Tien's *Family Style* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis' New Works Collective); *Carmen* (Hawai'i Opera Theatre); *An American Dream* (Hawai'i Opera Theatre, Opera Santa Barbara, Virginia Opera, Opera Maine Studio, Indiana University, Manhattan School of Music); *Madama Butterfly* (Virginia Opera); *Erminia* (Opera Lafayette/Kennedy Center); *Scalia/Ginsburg* (The Princeton Festival); *La Cenerentola* (Opera Columbus); *Tosca* (South Bend Symphony); Sosa's *The Lake* (ArtSounds, Kansas City); CARE Monologue Film Project (Cleveland Play House); *Looking at You* (Carnegie Mellon); *Silent Night, La traviata, Così fan tutte*, and *Sweeney Todd* (University of Kentucky). Creative positions: Opera Maine Studio Artist Program Director (*Rappahannock County, Rocking Horse Winner, The Fall of the House of Usher, As One, Three Decembers, Sumeida's Song*); Artist Resident (Hewnoaks Artist Colony); Creative Associate for Seán Curran Company's *Dream'd in a Dream* (BAM Next Wave Festival). Insta: @richardgammondirector, www.richard-gammon.com

YUKI IZUMIHARA, Co-Projection Designer

Yuki Izumihara (she/her) is an award winning scenic, projection, and production designer born in Shimonoseki City, Japan, based in Oakland, CA since 2023. Ms. Izumihara's work is influenced by years of martial arts training and is animated by a belief in discipline, ethics, and craftsmanship. Her work has been featured at LA Opera, SF Symphony, the New World Symphony, Opera Theater of St. Louis, San Diego Opera, Opera Omaha, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Shakespeare Theater Company, Huntington Theater Company, Miami New Drama, the Hammer Museum, Getty Villa Museum, and various cities across the country.

SEIFALLAH SALOTTO-CRISTOBAL, (he/him/his) Co-Projection Designer

SeifAllah Salotto-Cristobal has traveled across the country designing lighting and digital media for theatre, opera, dance, concerts, and events. Among the companies he has worked with are Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Program, Portland Stage Company, Umbrella Stage Company, Ogunquit Playhouse, Maine State Music Theatre, Remote Theatre Project, Opera Maine, Opera Colorado, Palm Beach Opera, Tulsa Opera, Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Unicorn Theatre, Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts, and Theatre at Monmouth. He holds an M.F.A. in design from the University of Missouri-Kansas City with a focus on lighting and projection design and is currently the Associate Professor of Lighting Design at the University of Southern Maine. Proud member of United Scenic Artists 829.

JAMIE GRANT, Lighting Designer

Lighting Design credits include Resident Designer for the Portland Ballet Company with works that include *Sleeping Beauty, Dracula, Persephone & Hades, Victorian Nutcracker, Giselle, Firebird*. Portland Stage: *Last Ship to Proxima Centauri, Ring of Fire, Where We Stand*. Maine State Music Theatre: *Jersey Boys, Welcome Home, Christine & Patsy*. Maine Choral Arts Society/Portland Ballet: *Carmina Burana, The Armed Man, Requiem*. Portland Symphony Orchestra: *The Magic of Christmas*. Opera Maine: *Rigoletto, Madama Butterfly, La Fille Du Regiment, Hansel und Gretel, Romeo et Juliette, Barber of Seville, Don Giovanni*. Colby College: *Break, Burn, Build, Wendy and the Neckbeards, End of Men*. Jamie is also the General Manager of the Westbrook Performing Arts Center.

STACEY SALOTTO-CRISTOBAL, (she/her) Stage Manager

Stacey Salotto-Cristobal has been stage managing for over a decade. She holds a B.A. in Theatre Arts from Franklin Pierce College and an M.F.A. in Stage Management from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She has worked for Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Des Moines Metro Opera, Pensacola Opera, Amarillo Opera, Tri-Cities Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Tulsa Opera, Wagon Wheel Theatre, Barrington Stage Company, Maine State Music Theatre and The Boston Conservatory at Berklee. She teaches stage management at The University of Southern Maine, mentors the student stage managers in the theatre department, and works in the Education Department at Portland Stage Company. Recently, Stacey was the Stage Manager for Opera Maine's co-production of *La Boheme* with the Portland Symphony Orchestra. This is Stacey's fourth production with Opera Maine's Studio Artist Program.

CALIEN LEWIS, Dramaturg

Calien Lewis is a retired attorney whose career included stints as a college instructor, Executive Director of a national peace organization, and Executive Director of the Maine Justice Foundation (formerly the Maine Bar Foundation). She has formal studies in music and theatre, and has worked with Opera Maine since 1998, serving as a board member, scenery painter, prop master, and dramaturg. As dramaturg, she has developed workshops on opera-related topics and Opera Maine's repertoire. Her pre-curtain conversations have been featured for over a decade.

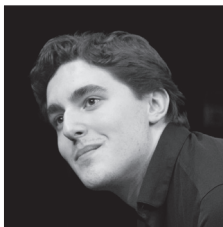
BAILEY BALDWIN, Assistant Stage Manager

Bailey Baldwin is a recent graduate from University of Southern Maine's theatre program. This is her third production as assistant stage manager with Opera Maine. She has previously stage-managed shows at the University of Southern Maine including *Little Women, Gianni Schicchi, and The Prom*.

BIOS – PERFORMERS

JACK HICKS

Jack Hicks is a tenor from Bernardsville, NJ, and a recent graduate of the Juilliard School studying with William Burden, where he also serves as an Ear Training Teaching Fellow. This year at Juilliard Hicks sang Don Basilio and Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and The Prologue in *The Turn of the Screw* while covering Peter Quint. Concerts this year include Touching Magic: A Juilliard-Sibelius Academy Collaboration, Juilliard Songfest, Tom Cipullo's *Liederabend*, and the second annual Pride Songbook. This summer, he will be a Studio Artist at Opera Maine, where he will play Yale Freshman in Gregory Spear's *Paul's Case* and will be in the chorus of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, in which he will also cover Anthony. Hicks has previously studied voice with Lorraine Nubar at Juilliard Pre-College, piano with Alice Fergau, and conducting with Oliver Hagen. Passionate about all kinds of theater, recent roles include George Antrobus Wilder's *The Skin of our Teeth*, Archibald Craven in Gasser's *The Secret Garden*, Cinderella's Prince in Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, and Robert Martin in Lambert and Morrison's *The Drowsy Chaperone*. Hicks is a winner of the Schmidt Undergraduate Competition and a second prize winner of the Shirley Rabb Winston Competition. In the fall, he will begin graduate studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.



DANIEL ILLIG

Hailing from San Francisco, baritone Daniel Illig has been praised for his versatility across genres and performance styles. He was most recently seen as Jim Crowley in the New York premiere of *An American Dream* by Jack Perla at the Manhattan School of Music. He debuted with Utah Festival Opera performing Georg Nowak in *"She Loves Me!"* along with covering Papageno in *The Magic Flute* the same season. Additional roles include Frederic Fleet in *Titanic* in concert with 42nd Street Moon at the Alcazar Theatre in San Francisco, Sid from Britten's *Albert Herring*, Manfred Lewin in Jake Heggie's *For A Look or a Touch*, and Lord Cecil in Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*. In 2017 Daniel was a featured recitalist with The Montgomery Arts Commission in Cincinnati. Mr. Illig received his Bachelors of Music from University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where he studied under William McGraw, he is currently perusing his Masters of Music on a full scholarship at the Manhattan School of Music.



ALISON KESSLER

Alison Kessler is a soprano from New Rochelle, NY studying with William Burden. She is a recent graduate of The Juilliard School and previously studied at the Juilliard Pre-College Voice Program for two years with Lorraine Nubar. She now serves as Ms. Nubar's Teaching Assistant. This summer, Kessler is excited to be a Studio Artist at Opera Maine where she will perform in Spears' *Paul's Case* as Drawing Teacher/Opera Singer II/ Maid II and in the chorus of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. In Fall 2024, Kessler made her role debut at Juilliard as La Contessa in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Her 2024-25 season also included covering the role of The Governess in Britten's *Turn of the Screw* and singing Sœur Félicité in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*. Kessler has performed in recitals curated by Pierre Vallet and Ben Moore, and a Cabaret directed by Jeanne Slater and John Arida. She is also a Connecticut District winner of the 2024-25 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. In the fall, Kessler will return to Juilliard to pursue her master's degree in vocal performance.



DEIRDRE LAHIFF

New York native and mezzo-soprano Deirdre Lahiff is so happy to join Opera Maine this summer as a Studio Artist, where she will sing the role of the English Teacher and Maid III in *Paul's Case* and will cover the role of the Beggar Woman and sing in the chorus of *Sweeney Todd*. Recent performances include *Too Many Sopranos* as Dame Doleful, the title role in *Rusalka: The Littlest Mermaid*, *Idomeneo* as Idamante, *Norma* as Adalgisa, and *La Traviata* as Flora. Deirdre is a former Smith Young Artist with Cedar Rapids Opera. An avid soloist, Deirdre can frequently be heard on the concert stage. She recently performed as the soprano soloist in Ravel's *Trois Chansons* conducted by Kessa Mefford, with an album recording available later this year. She programmed and performed the second year of her Sounds of Spring recital series, with performances in New York City and New York's Hudson Valley in May of this year. Upcoming performances include a concert performance of *Carmen* in collaboration with William Lewis. Deirdre earned her Master of Music degree from New York University Steinhardt in the studio of soprano Rosa Vento and her Bachelor of Arts degree from Providence College in the studio of soprano Sarah Dunn. For more information about Deirdre, please visit www.deirdrelahiff.com



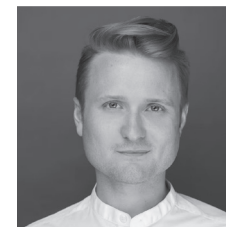
OLUWAGBEMIGA DAVID OLUWO

Nigerian-American Bass-baritone Oluwagbemiga "David" Oluwo is a rising opera singer currently residing in Houston, Texas, where he recently completed his Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at the University of Houston under the tutelage of Dr. Timothy Jones. This summer, David is excited to make his professional debut at Opera Maine, performing the role of the Principal in Gregory Spears' first opera, *Paul's Case*. He has been seen in numerous productions at the Moores Opera Center, portraying the roles of Curio in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, Le Laquais / Officiel du Port in Phillip Glass' *La Belle et la Bête*, Frank in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, José Tripaldi in Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar*, Pritschitsch in Lehár's *Die Lustige Witwe*, and Il Commendatore in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at Lyric Opera Studio Weimar. His most recent engagements include Betto di Signa in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and covering the role of Albert Prosser in the final public workshop of Tom Cipullo's newest opera, . David is excited to join the Maryland Opera Studio this fall, studying under world-renowned bass-baritone Kevin Short. David is a proud alumnus of Houston Grand Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy and Lyric Opera Studio Weimar.



JAMES STEVENS

Praised for his "focused, suave tenor [which] was well suited to the assignment" (Opera Today) and "possessing a clarion voice" and "appropriately stealing every scene he was in" (OperaWire), tenor James Stevens is rapidly establishing himself as a sought-after tenor throughout the country. Recent appearances include singing with Union Avenue Opera as Henrik Egerman in Sondheim's , *A Little Night Music*, with his performance praised by critics as "the perfect mix of pain and comedy...with a clear as a bell voice" (Stage Left St. Louis) and as Peter Quint in Britten's , *The Turn of the Screw*, with his performance praised having "nearly stole the show" and having a voice "which soared in Britten's vocal writing" (Broadway World). Other recent appearances include Co-worker 2 in Black/Revé Like's *Black Coffee* and Neighbor 2 in Tsui/Tien's *Family Style* at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis (New Works Collective 2025), as well as Thespis in Rameau's *Platée* with Des Moines Metro Opera, and Léon in Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles* at Chautauqua Opera, with the composer in attendance. He also covered the role of Almaviva in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Other recent operatic highlights include singing Alfred in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Tollerer in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*, and the title role in Britten's *Albert Herring*. Upcoming appearances include returning to Union Avenue Opera in their production of Strauss' *Salome* as 4th Jew.



SIYI YAN

Described as “an absolutely brilliant soprano” by the Rutland Herald, Chinese soprano Siyi Yan is currently pursuing an Artist Diploma at the IU Jacobs School of Music. She was most recently a resident artist with Opera North, where she performed Gilda in Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, Juno in Offenbach’s *Orphée aux enfers*, and Florinda Sondheim’s *Into the Woods*. In addition to performing History Teacher in *Paul’s Case*, Yan will also cover Johanna Barker in *Sweeney Todd*. Yan excelled in the 2024 National Association of Teachers of Singing Artist Awards Competition, reaching the semifinals. Her notable achievements also include being a finalist in the 2022 Premiere Opera Foundation International Vocal Competition in NYC. In addition, she clinched first prize in both the Indiana Chapter of the National Society of Arts and Letters Voice Competition and in the Tri-State College Vocal Competition. She will also appear as a guest artist in the Dallas Opera Showcase Concert. In past seasons with IU Opera Theater, she portrayed Yvette in Puccini’s *La Rondine*, Cunegonde in Bernstein’s *Candide*, Setsuko Kobayashi in Perla’s *An American Dream*, and Frasquita in Bizet’s *Carmen*. She previously performed the role of the Queen of the Night in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* in 2021.



EVGENIA TRUKSHA, Pianist

Evgenia Truksha was born in Riga, Latvia. Evgenia emigrated to the United States in 2001 to study with renowned pianist, Mark Zeltser, and later continued her education at the University of Southern California, studying piano performance with Dr. Daniel Pollack. She holds a master’s degree in Piano Performance from Texas Christian University, where she studied with Dr. Tamas Ungar, and a Professional Certificate Diploma in Collaborative Piano from Manhattan School of Music, studying with Prof. Thomas Muraco. Evgenia is a prizewinner of several national and international piano competitions, including Wideman International Piano Competition (USA), Music Teachers National Association Piano Competition, (MTNA, Regional/National winner), Jyväskylä International Piano Competition (Finland), and Epinal International Piano Competition (France), among others. Recent performance venues include Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall (Zankel Hall, Weil Recital Hall), La Jolla Music Society (CA), as well as a series of recitals, full opera productions and opera in concert performances in collaboration with Opera in Williamsburg (VA) and Opera Maine (ME), and Manhattan School of Music (NY). Ms. Truksha has served as collaborative piano faculty at Mahanaim College (Long Island), New York Lyric Opera, Manhattan School Summer Voice Festival, International Vocal Arts Institute at Mannes School of Music, Texas Christian University and San Diego University. She has been serving as an artistic staff, opera coach and pianist at Manhattan School of Music since 2011.

SPECIAL THANKS

Gregory Spears, Sarah & Stuart Bailey, Jane Berentson & Fred Bleakley, Margaret & Mark Braun, Jennifer & Patrick Civiello, CycleMania, Good Theater, Rosemary Harris, Keith & Christina Heldenbrand, Claudia King & Paul Weaver, Betsy Mayberry, Mountainside Community Church, Portland Media Center, Marguerite Prentice, Arlene & Bill Schwind, Starbird Piano Gallery, Tally’s Kitchen

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