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Concert: Semele

Geoffrey McDonald

R. B. Schlather

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ITHACA COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES
Michael Richardson, Interim Dean,
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Karl Paulnack, Dean,
and the
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

Present

Semele

by Georg Frideric Handel

Music Director
Geoffrey McDonald

Director
R.B. Schlather

Producer
Blaise Bryski

Scenic Designer
Daniel Zimmerman

Costume Designer
Greg Robbins

Lighting Designer
Erik Herskowitz

Technical Director
Guthrie Park

Stage Manager
Danielle Campbell

Performing Edition
Prepared by Peter Jones

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

“A Wolf In Sheep’s Clothing: Handel’s ‘Semele’”

Handel’s “Semele” was a huge scandal.

The English audiences at the work’s premiere as part of a Lenten concert series in 1744 were so scandalized that the composer had tried to pass the sensual, violent, completely *operatic* work off as an *oratorio*, that after the four-performance run, the piece disappeared from the repertoire until musicologists resurrected it in the 1970s. A tragic loss considering how glorious the music is and credible the story (although “Where ere you walk” did survive as a solo excerpt and is one of Handel’s best-known tunes). This presentation at Ithaca College is among only a handful of fully staged productions since, making the experience you’re about to have a unique encounter.

To understand this outrage, the distinction between an *opera* and an *oratorio* becomes important. Basically, one is intended to be staged and one not. And “Semele,” which Handel originally presented as an *oratorio*, cries out to be staged. It begs for it. It is so completely a believable dramatic score, a juicy mash up of ambition, desire, deception, revenge, and punishment, with vivid characterizations, musically inventive choruses and ensembles, opportunities for virtuosic solo singing and dynamic stage effects. It seems inconceivable that Handel thought he would get away with presenting such a story NOT as an opera. But he was grasping to please an audience that would no longer pay to attend *Italian* opera, which he had been successfully writing and producing for decades in London. He was trying to fit in to current trends, to bend his giant imagination to a new form.

I can only assume that Handel’s imagination got the best of him, inspired by William Congreve’s English text based on the myth of the mortal woman Semele, mother of Dionysus, and he couldn’t help himself from shaping it as he shaped the great operas from his youth. Music director Geoffrey McDonald and I have produced several of Handel’s iconic early operas together, and this piece bears such a resemblance. Handel so musically digs into the psychology of the

Student Assistants Spring 2016

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Scene Shop Assistants.	Rachel Fitzgerald, Guthrie Park, Margaret Parke Mark Rogalus, Rory Schall, Katie Sheaffer, Max Weinstein
Properties Shop Assistants	Olivia Barrett, Emily Freeman, Chloe Kirkwood,
Costume Shop Assistants.	Anna Blazer, Lauren Brandt, Emma Duncan, Rebecca Dwight, Breana McGlockling, Margaret Parker, Victoria Pizappi, Shivanna Sooknanan
Light Shop Assistants	Evan Herman-Chin, Erik Herskowitz, Alison Kress, Ryan McSherry, Eric Mitchell
Paint Shop Assistants	Daniel Allen, Mari Ward, Karina Sanchez
Sound Shop Assistants	Sam Schloegel, Paul Vaillancourt, Emily Weisbecker, Sean Woods
Front of House Design Assistant . .	Adam Ball
Ticket Office Assistants	Jessica Braham, Julia Katz, Valerie Shvedok
Web Assistant.	Paul Vaillancourt
McCarroll Theatre Technical Supervisor	Nicholas Palatella
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Teaching Assistants

Dialects	Niko Kaim, Brianne Wylie
History of Theatre.....	Danica Kelley
Jazz 1	Aaron Alcaraz, Kyra Leeds
Script Analysis.....	Emma Duncan
Sophomore Movement	Caitlin Ort
Stagecraft.....	Emma Duncan
Acting for the Camera.....	Allison Lott
Voice and Movement	Alexa Cepeda, Brianna Ford, Jelani Pitcher
Theatre Tech 1: Lighting & Sound....	Evan Herman-Chin
Theatre Tech 1: Painting.....	Karina Sanchez
Tech II: Painting.....	Daniel Allen, Mari Ward

Biographical Notes

Artistic Staff (continued)

R. B. Schlather (Stage Director) is a 2008 graduate of Ithaca College's B.A. Drama degree program. His recent directing credits include *Don Giovanni* for Opera Ithaca, Philip Glass' *In The Penal Colony* for Boston Lyric Opera, *Norma* at the Gran Theatre del Liceu, and *Orlando* and *Alcina* as open process art exhibitions in NYC. In the 2015/16 season, Schlather directs *Little Girl Match Passion* with Illumin Arts as an installation at the Perez Art Museum, Miami, a double bill of Busoni's and Puccini's *Turandot* for Bard Music Festival at the Richard B Fisher Center, and prepares for an exhibition of *Ariodante* in NYC. He has had professional affiliations with the New York City Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Canadian Opera Company, Chicago Opera Theater, Boston Lyric Opera, Bard SummerScape, Tanglewood Music Festival, Glimmerglass Opera, Portland Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, Ash Lawn Opera, and (le) Poisson Rouge. His work has been presented by CATCH! and Prelude, and published in Emergency INDEX 2011. www.rbschlather.com.

Edward Yankow (Assistant Director) is a junior B.A. theatre studies major from Nantucket, MA. His previous Ithaca College credits include director of *Red* and *Fifth Planet*, both with IC Players, and director of *No Exit*, a No Bucks production. Edward's acting credits include Understudy/Ensemble in *Fires in the Mirror*. Other credits include Jake in Theatre Emory's production of *Moonlight*, and director of *Recent Tragic Events* at Northfield Mount Hermon School. He is directing the IC Player's production of *Fifth Planet*, opening later this semester.

Daniel Zimmerman (Scenic Designer) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre Arts.

characters, setting their passionate interactions with such spark and danger, that it would make anyone who thought they were going to see a bible story played out politely in concert attire blush.

So then, how to stage this work here at Ithaca College? What is our relationship today to gods and goddesses, to thunderbolts, Augers, Zephyrs, Loves and Graces? Beats me if I know. I need to bring it back to earth, as it were, to a context more recognizable. The story is about an ambitious girl who wants immortality. And how to achieve that? Seduce the most powerful man in town, get him to fly you out of your lame going-nowhere life, put you up in a palace, take you to Hollywood, and make you a star. The catch is, once his wife finds out about his infidelity, she'll enact all her resources to see you're punished. Especially when that wife is Juno, the protector of marriage: the wrong goddess to cross! So we have the timeless story of an ambitious girl, a powerful man, and his vindictive wife. Given how nasty, self absorbed and narcissistic all the characters are, we've geared up for an ironic, suburban soap opera take on the characters, located in a stripped down, subtext-driven, site-specific theatrical landscape dreamily prowled by gods and mortals in their vain, vicious pursuits.

I don't think about theater as naturalistic – what's natural about a bunch of people sitting in the dark watching other people pretend to be other people? Yet, there's something fundamentally necessary about this exchange as it has been going on for centuries. It seems connected to the human need for catharsis: we as an audience desire to feel pity, revulsion, terror, and compassion for these people on stage pretending to be other people. As a director, I am chasing a theater that acknowledges its artifice in order to achieve something deeply honest. Focusing on the exchange, the uniquely human exchanges of melody, conjured deep from within the performers, so that we can be awoken by the ecstasy of sound, and in that moment feel so fully what it is to be alive.

~ R.B. Schlather

Cast *in order of appearance*

Juno.....	Hector Gonzalez Smith
Jupiter.....	Joseph Michalczyk-Lupa
Cadmus.....	Michael Galvin
Athamas.....	Nicholas Kelliher
Ino.....	Ariana Warren
Semele.....	Laura McCauley
Iris.....	Andrea Bickford
Somnus.....	Michael Galvin
Chorus.....	Anastasia Sereda, Andrew Carr, Bergen Price, Brandon Mancuso, D'quan Tyson, Elias Husiak, Heather Barns, Holden Turner, Johanna Ruby, Marshall Pokrentowski, Megan Benjamin, Olivia Bartfield, Patrick Starke, Rachel Silverstein, Sage Stoakley, Sherley-Ann Belleus, Stephen Tzianabos, Timothy Powers
Zephyrs.....	Claude Mumbere, Nick Byron, James Counihan, Cameron Mitchell
Bacchus.....	Trevor Nardone

Covers

Semele.....	Natalia Bratkovski
Juno.....	Ariana Warren
Athamas.....	Rachel Silverstein
Iris.....	Sage Stoakley
Ino.....	Bergen Price
Jupiter.....	Timothy Powers
Cadmus, Somnus.....	Elias Husiak

Understudies never substitute for listed performers unless a specific announcement for the appearance is made at the time of the performance.

There will be two, fifteen-minute intermissions.

Biographical Notes

Artistic Staff (continued)

Geoffrey McDonald (Conductor) is Music Director of On Site Opera, and served as Assistant Conductor for Opera Philadelphia, the American Symphony Orchestra, and Gotham Opera. A dedicated educator, he served on the faculties of Bard College and the Longy School of Music, and was Music Director of the Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra and the Columbia University Bach Society. He is an active composer, and an original member (cellist/songwriter) of indie rock band “Miracles of Modern Science.” He earned his Masters in Conducting at Mannes College, and his Bachelors in Music at Princeton University.

Guthrie Park (Technical Director) is a senior B.F.A. theatrical production arts major from New York, NY. His previous Ithaca College credits include technical director of *As You Like It* and *Flight of the Heart*. Other credits include carpenter for *Much Ado About Nothing* and carpenter for *King Lear*, both at The Public Theater in New York City.

Victoria Pizappi (Assistant Costume Designer) is a junior B.F.A. theatrical production arts major from Bloomingburg, NY. Her previous Ithaca College credits include wardrobe supervisor for *Anna in the Tropics*, and assistant props master for *Little Women*. Other credits include costumes and wardrobe intern for the Hangar Theatre’s 2015 season, and costume designer for *Godspell* at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, Bethel, NY.

Greg Robbins (Costume Designer) is an associate professor in the B.F.A. Theatrical Production Arts program and has designed over 50 productions for Ithaca College. His designs for *The Magic Flute* were accepted into America's gold-medal-winning *Mozart in America* for the Prague Quadrennial. Greg has been honored at the Kennedy Center with a first-place award in design excellence for his designs for *Medea*. His costume designs have been seen from London to Sesame Street; Dallas Theatre Center and Trinity Rep to the Nebraska Repertory Theatre. He was the Professor in Residence at the Ithaca College London Center for the spring semesters of 2003 and 2010.

Biographical Notes

Artistic Staff

Blaise Bryski's (Producer) experience reflects a broad range of musical interests. He was for many years staff accompanist for the UCLA Department of Music and was a professional pianist in Los Angeles. Mr. Bryski has performed with the New York Concert Singers, the Aldeburgh Connection/CBC Radio, Ensemble X, the Green Umbrella New Music series, Society for New Music, the Nakamichi Baroque Festival, the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, and the Cincinnati Symphony. He is a member of Mother Mallard, the world's oldest synthesizer band, which recently opened the Berlin Atonal Festival. Mr. Bryski holds a doctorate in 18th-century performance practice from Cornell, an MFA from CalArts and is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Currently, he serves as opera coach in the Ithaca College School of Music and as visiting lecturer in piano at Cornell University. He lives with his wife, Kristin, in Fall Creek.

Danielle Campell (Stage Manager) is a senior B.A. theatre studies major from Newton, MA. Her previous Ithaca College main stage credits include assistant stage manager for *Anonymouse*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *L'Étoile*, and *Mere Mortals*, and production assistant for *An Enemy of the People*. She has also worked for SpeakEasy, Boston, MA as a production management intern, and stage manager at The Circuit Theatre Company, in Newton, MA.

Erik Herskowitz (Lighting Designer) is a senior B.F.A. theatrical production arts major from Tappan, NY. His previous Ithaca College main stage credits include lighting designer for *The Good Person of Setzuan*, assistant lighting designer for *L'Étoile*, and production electrician for *A Chorus Line*. Other credits include lighting designer for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Wells College, assistant lighting designer for *The Fantastics* at Cider Mill Playhouse, and assistant lighting designer for *Buyer and Cellar* at The Kitchen Theatre.

Orchestra

Violin I.....	Emily Wilcox, Esther Witherell, Emily Kenyon
Violin II.....	Kangzhou Li, Amy Chryst, Reuben Foley
Viola.....	Austin Savage, Samuel Rubin
Cello.....	Bryce Tempest, Julia Rupp
Bass.....	Alex Toth
Oboe.....	Melissa DeMarinis, Sarah Pinto
Bassoon.....	Sonja Larson
Horn.....	Evan Young, Victoria Boell
Trumpet.....	Matthew Brockman, Joseph Brozek
Timpani.....	Corrine Steffens
Theorbo and Baroque Guitar.....	Daniel Boring
Harpischord.....	Mary Holzhauer

Production Staff

Rehearsal Pianists.....	Aimee Radics, Kamna Gupta
Chorus Master.....	Aimee Radics
Assistant Conductor.....	Zeek Smith
Assistant Director.....	Edward Yankow
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Angela Griggs, Abi Rowe
Production Assistants.....	Kate Carolan, Catharine Dent
Assistant Scenic Designer.....	Daniel Allen
Assistant Costume Designer.....	Victoria Pizappi
Wardrobe Supervisor.....	Lauren Brandt
Properties Master.....	Rory Schall
Master Carpenter.....	Kathryn Sheaffer
Charge Scenic Artist.....	Karina Sanchez
Production Electrician.....	Evan Herman-Chin
Master Electrician.....	Kathleen Taylor
Lighting Board Operator.....	Teddy Kosciuszek
Followspot Operators.....	Alexandra Nowicki, Indigo Shea

Crews

Carpentry

Hannah Anderson
Aiden Ankli
Juliana Betancur
Lawrence Bierria
Keely Bochicchio-Sipos
Luke Brenon
Keara Byron

Alexis Garrett
Daniella Liotta
Evan Morrison
Niamh O'Connor
Stephanie Seiden
Joshua Wilde
John Winter

Costumes

Emily Cartiagine
Emma Green
Alexis Julien Trice
Thomas Lyons
Robin Mazer

Aaron Roberts
Tyler Sapp
Srishti Shah
Ryan Valentin

Electrics

Alisar Awwad
Amanda Balter
Justine Crespo
Anthony Di Nizo
Anthony DiBernardo
Kylie Heyman
Teddy Kosciuszek

Moorea Martin
Alexandra Nowicki
Kathryn O'Connor
Anastasia Remoundos
Indy Shea
Elliot Vitaz
Julia Zubrovich

Properties

Stephen Carleton
Jessica Harron
Anupama Irri

Caroline Maloney
Ross Silver
Chelsea Whittemore

Scenic Art

Anastasia Arvanites
John Bracken
Cara Frisina

Sydney Hill
James Kerr
Kayla Sears

Biographical Notes

Cast (continued)

Anastasia Sereda (Chorus) is a sophomore B.M. vocal performance major from Natick, MA. This is her Ithaca College debut.

Rachel E. Silverstein (Athamas Cover, Chorus) is a junior B.M. vocal performance major from Ambridge, PA. Her previous Ithaca College credits include the cover for Meg in the main stage production of *Little Women*, Candy Mallow in a scene from *The Golden Ticket*, and Mukhtar in a scene from *Thumbprint* both with the Ithaca College Opera Workshop. She played Reggie Fluty in *The Laramie Project* with IC Greens Theater Project.

Sage Stoakley (Chorus, Iris Understudy) is a freshman B.M. vocal performance and music education major from Austin, TX. This is her first production at Ithaca College. Previous credits include Nellie in *South Pacific*, Fantine in *Les Miserables*, and Blanche in *Bonnie and Clyde the Musical*, all at MacTheatre.

D'quan Tyson (Chorus) is a senior B.M. vocal performance major from East Stroudsburg, PA. His previous Ithaca College credits include Friedrich Bhaer cover in the main stage production of *Little Women*, James Hemmings cover/soloist in *The Wolf by the Ears* with the Opera Workshop, and *New American Opera* with the Opera Workshop. Other credits include the Opera Ithaca productions of *Don Giovanni*, and ensemble in *Pirates of Penzance* and ensemble in *Mikado* with the Pennsylvania Lyric Opera.

Stephen Tzianabos (Chorus) is a senior B.M. vocal performance major from Southborough, MA. His previous Ithaca College credits include American Opera Scenes and *The Wolf by the Ears* both with Opera Workshop.

Ariana Warren (Ino, Juno Understudy) is a senior B.M. vocal performance/music education major from East Northport, NY. Her previous Ithaca College main stage credits include Jo in *Little Women*, Aloès/dance captain in *L'Étoile*, and Abbess Cover/Chorus in *Suor Angelica*. Additionally, she performed as Concubine in the Ithaca College Light Opera production of *The Song of Solomon*. Other credits include Player/Elena Cover in *Il Sogno* at Opera Ithaca.

Biographical Notes

Cast (continued)

Laura K. McCauley (Semele) is a senior B.M. vocal performance major from Wayne, PA. This is Laura's third mainstage production at Ithaca College. Her past opera roles include Adza in *L'Etoile* and Beth in *Little Women*. In Opera Workshop this year, she was Bess McNeil in a scene from *Breaking the Waves*. She played Mrs. Phagan in the Ithaca College Graduate production of *Parade* last year.

Joseph Michalczyk-Lupa (Jupiter) is a junior B.M. vocal performance major from Ludlow, MA. Joseph has previously performed at IC, but is performing in the principle cast for the first time in *Semele*.

Cameron Mitchell (Zephyr) is a freshman B.F.A. acting major from North Potomac, MD. His previous Ithaca College credits include Bob in *Beyond Therapy* with IC Players. Other credits include Ernst in *Cabaret*, and Adult Man in *Spring Awakening*, both with Act Two at the Levine School of Music.

Trevor Nardone (Bacchus) is a freshman exploratory major from Monroe, NY. His previous Ithaca College credits include ensemble for the senior thesis film *Porn: The Musical*.

Marshall Pokrentowski (Chorus) is a sophomore music education major from Syracuse, NY. His previous Ithaca College credits include Collins in *RENT* with the Ithaca College Greens Theatre Project.

Timothy Powers (Jupiter Understudy, Chorus) is a senior B.M. vocal performance major from Summerfield, NC. His previous Ithaca College credits include Marquis de Lafayette in *A Wolf by the Ears*. Other credits include Aegean in *Boys from Syracuse*, Captain Duval in *The New Moon*, and Lord Jasper Tring in *Me and My Girl*, all with College Light Opera Company.

Bergen Price (Chorus, Ino Understudy) is a sophomore B.M. vocal performance and music education major from Skytop, PA. Bergen is a member of the Ithaca College Choir, and student in Dr. Brad Hougham's studio.

Management Staff, Spring 2016

Production Liaison.....Adam Ball
Marketing Associate..... Alyssa Napier
Publicity Associate..... Arielle Rubin
Assistant Publicity Associate..... Chelsea Whittemore
Promotions Associate..... Ryan Dickson
Displays Associate..... Lindsey Davis
Reception Coordinators..... Cara Frisina, Cynthia Waibel
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Concessions Managers..... Jared Fink, Shayna Fishkin
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Earl McCarroll Studio 2 Liaison.. Sydney Hill
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Electronic Media Manager..... Rachel Canter
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Acknowledgements

Wigs provided by WIGBOYS

Hangar Theatre

Cornell University Department of Performing and Media Arts
Ithaca College School of Music Voice Faculty:

Erik Angerhofer

Randie Blooding

John Holiday

Brad Hougham

Carl Johengen

Jennifer Kay

Dawn Pierce

Caitlin Mathes

Carol McAmis

Deborah Montgomery

David Parks

Patrice Pastore

Ivy Walz

Marc Webster

Biographical Notes

Cast

Heather C. Barnes (Chorus) is a second year graduate vocal performance student from Yonkers, NY. Previous Ithaca College credits include Ensemble/Slave Woman/Sally Hemings cover in *The Wolf by the Ears*, and *New American Opera*, both with the Opera Workshop. Other credits include Carrie in *Carousel* at Opera Breve, Wichita Falls, TX, Witch in *Hansel & Gretel* and Lucy in *The Hotel Casablanca* at Adelphi University Main Stage, Long Island, NY.

Olivia Bartfield (Chorus) is a freshman B.M. vocal performance and music education major from Centerport, NY. This is her first production at Ithaca College.

Sherley-Ann Belleus (Chorus) is a sophomore B.M. music education major. Her previous Ithaca College credits include the ensemble in *The Wolf by the Ears* with the Opera Workshop.

Megan Benjamin (Chorus) is a senior B.M. vocal performance major from Oneonta, NY. Her previous Ithaca College credits include Maddie in *Heart Center: The Yoga Musical* with the IC Student Workshop, and Young Girl in *Spurt of Blood* with Macabre Theatre Ensemble. Other credits include Fräulein Silberklang in *Der Schauspieldirektor* with Franco-American Vocal Academy in Salzburg, Austria, and Lucy in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* with Orpheus Theatre in Oneonta, NY.

Andrea Bickford (Iris) is a junior B.M. vocal performance major. This is Andrea's first Ithaca College production. This past summer she studied in Italy with "Si Parla, Si Canta."

Natasha Bratkovski (Semele Cover) is a first year graduate vocal performance student from Corning, NY. Previous credits include Tisbe in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* for Taos Opera Institute Scenes program in Taos, NM, soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* and Nichlaus in Ofeenbach's *The Tales of Hoffman* in Scene Productions at Chapman University in Orange, CA, Mallika in Delibes' *Lakme*, Angela in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, and Mercedes in Bizet's *Carmen*.

Biographical Notes

Cast (continued)

Andrew Carr (Chorus) is a junior B.M. music education and vocal performance major from Royersford, PA. His previous Ithaca College credits include Young Solider in the graduate concert production of *Parade*, and Man in *Edges* with IC Light Opera. Other credits include Tobias in *Sweeney Todd* with the Melodramatics Theatre Company in Ithaca, NY.

Michael Galvin (Cadmus, Somnus) is a junior B.M. vocal performance major from Loudonville, NY. His previous Ithaca College credits include Gideon March/Mr. Dashwood (cover) in *Little Women*, and Phil/Man/Baritone/Grandma in *New American Opera Scenes* with Opera Workshop. Other credits include Marchese/Quinhault/Malvolio in the scenes program with "Si Parla, Si Canta" in Urbania, Italy.

Hector Gonzalez Smith (Juno) is a graduate vocal performance major from Jacksonville, FL. He received his undergraduate degree from Stetson University. His previous credits include *From Handel to Heggie* with Opera Ithaca, Lindoro in *L'italiana in Algieri* and Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, both at Stetson Opera Theater. Additionally, he performed as Edward in *Blood Brothers*, Man 1 in *Songs for a New World*, was a featured soloist at First Coast Opera, and worked with Central Florida Lyric Opera.

Elias Husiak (Cadmus/Somnus Understudy, Chorus) is a freshman B.F.A. musical theatre major from New York, NY. His previous credits at Ithaca College include IC Players' production of *Beyond Therapy* as the role of Andrew the Waiter. Other credits include Sweeney Todd in *Sweeney Todd* at LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts.

Nicholas Kelliher (Athamas) is a junior B.M. vocal performance major from Baldwin, NY. His previous Ithaca College credits include Ada in *The Enchantress* and Fidel Castro in *World Leaders* both with the Opera Workshop. Nicholas sings with the Ithaca College Choir and Madrigal Singers.

Brandon Mancuso (Chorus) is a senior B.A. theatre studies and music major from Monroe, NY. His previous Ithaca College credits include Jorge in *The Art of Adjustment*, Sam in *After the Beep*, and Mark in *Favorites*. His other credits include John Patrick Shanley in *Make John Patrick Shanley Go home* at Classic Stage Company in New York, NY.