

March 27 - 30, 2025 Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance Department of Voice & Opera and the Contemporary Directions Ensemble present

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

An Opera in a Prologue and Two Acts Composed by **Benjamin Britten**

Libretto by Myfanwy Piper, after the story by Henry James

Conductor Kirk Severtson

Scenic Designer **Kevin Judge**

Lighting Designer Shelby Loera[†]

Soundscape Designer **Zak Kerhoulas**‡

Assistant Conductors Francisco Fernandez*[‡], Michael Roest[‡]

Diction Coach Timothy Cheek Director **Chía Patiño**

Costume Designer Christianne Myers

Hair & Makeup Designer Brittany Crinson

Resident Dramaturg Karin Waidley

Rehearsal Pianists/Coaches Raphael Chou[‡] John Morefield[‡]

Intimacy Choreographer & Cultural Consultant **Raja Benz**

Production Stage Manager Kristen Barrett[†]

1st ASM Elliot Foster[†] Assistant Scenic Designer Lauren Streng[‡] Assistant Costume Designer Sammer Ali[‡] Assistant Lighting Designer Ethan J. Hoffman[‡] Assistant Dramaturgs Ellie Van Engen[‡], Eliza Vassalo[‡]

> ‡ SMTD student † SMTD Guest

Setting: The action takes place in and around Bly, a country house in the East of England, at the turn of the previous century.

The Turn of the Screw will be performed with one intermission.

*Assistant Conductor Fernandez will conduct the Sunday performance.

The Turn of the Screw is presented by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., publisher and copyright holder.

The performers in this production are students in the Department of Voice & Opera and the University Symphony Orchestra. The designers for this production are students, faculty, and/or guests of SMTD. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of SMTD. Thank you for supporting our educational mission.

Latecomers will be seated at a suitable break. As a courtesy to others, please turn off cellular phones and pagers and refrain from texting during the performance. Photography, audio recording, and videotaping of any kind are not permitted.

STATEMENT ON THE ANISHINAABE LAND TRANSFER

Anishinaabeg gaa bi dinokiiwaad temigad manda Michigan Kichi Kinoomaagegamig. Mdaaswinshwaaswaakshimdaaswishiniizhawaaswi gii-sababoonagak, Ojibweg, Odawaag, minwaa Bodwe'aadamiig wiiba gii-miigwenaa'aa maamoonjiniibina Kichi Kinoomaagegamigoong wi pii-gaa aanjibiigaadeg Kichi-Naakonigewinning, debendang manda aki, mampii Niisaajiwan, gewiinwaa niijaansiwaan ji kinoomaagaazinid. Daapanaming ninda kidwinan, megwaa minwaa gaa bi aankoosejig zhinda akiing minwaa gii-miigwewaad Kichi-Kinoomaagegamigoong aanji-daapinanigaade minwaa mshkowenjigaade.

The University of Michigan is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe people. In 1817, the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadami Nations made the largest single land transfer to the University of Michigan. This was offered ceremonially as a gift through the Treaty at the Foot of the Rapids so that their children could be educated. Through these words of acknowledgment, their contemporary and ancestral ties to the land and their contributions to the University are renewed and reaffirmed.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Thursday, March 27 & Saturday, March 29

> Prologue Tyrese Byrd

Governess **Jiayu Li**

Miles, a young boy in her care Sloane O'Neill

Flora, a young girl in her care Marisa Redding

Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper McKenna Jones

Miss Jessel, a former governess Maitri Alegría White

Peter Quint, a former manservant Peter Quint, a former manservant Tyrese Byrd

Ghost Storytellers Hunter Reid, Olivia Kirk, Koralynn Kennedy

Friday, March 28 & Sunday, March 30

Prologue Alexander Nick

Governess Christina Parson

Miles, a young boy in her care **Haley Hunt**

Flora, a young girl in her care Francesca Herrera

Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper Danielle Casós

Miss Jessel, a former governess Jennie Rupp

Alexander Nick

Carillon Performers Eric Whitmer, Sarah Penrose, Destiny Alleman, Zhengi Wang

ABOUT THE CAST

Tyrese Byrd (Peter Quint/Prologue) Grad Student, DMA Voice Performance, Greenville, SC

Danielle Casós (Mrs. Grose) Grad Student, SM Voice Performance, Boise, ID

Francesca Herrera (Flora) Grad Student, MM Voice Performance, Atlanta. GA

Haley Hunt (Miles) First-year, BM Vocal Performance, Pittsburgh, PA

McKenna Jones (Mrs. Grose) Grad Student, MM Voice Performance, Jackson, MI

Jiayu Li (Governess) Grad Student, DMA Voice Performance, Kunming, China

ABOUT THE CAST

Alexander Nick (Peter Quint/Prologue) Grad Student, MM Vocal Performance, Pepperell, MA

Sloane O'Neill (Miles) First-year, BM Voice Performance, Grosse Pointe, MI

Christina Parson (Governess) Grad Student, DMA Voice Performance, Falls Church, VA

Marisa Redding (Flora) Senior, BM Vocal Performance, Ann Arbor, MI

Jennie Rupp (Miss Jessel) Grad Student, MM Vocal Performance, Ann Arbor, MI

Maitri Alegría White (Miss Jessel) Grad Student, MM Voice, Marguette, MI

CONTEMPORARY DIRECTIONS ENSEMBLE

Kirk Severtson	, conductor
Francisco Fernandez, assistant conductor	
Michael Roest, 2nd as	sistant conductor
Violin I	Clarinet
rsten Lee**	Daniel Millan
Violin II	Bassoon
vonne Lee	Ella Hebrard
Viola	Horn
óia Findeis	Lillian Sears

Percussion Aidan Marckel

> Harp **Beth Henson**

Piano **Raphael Chou** John Morefield

**Concertmaster

Kir

Y

Jó

Cello Sarina Zhang

Double Bass Damian Rutti

> Flute Lydia Wu

Oboe Lillian Mathews

<u>Prologue</u>

The story is found in the diary of a young governess and is read at a gathering of strangers in an inn by the person who possesses the diary now. The setting is Bly, a country house in England, to which the governess comes to take charge of two young children, Miles and Flora. We learn that she was engaged by the childrens' uncle and guardian, under one condition: he was not to be bothered with any of their problems.

<u>Act I</u>

The situation seems at first to be happy and tranquil. When a letter arrives from Miles's school announcing his expulsion, the governess decides to say nothing about it. Some time thereafter, she sees a strange man about the house – on a tower, and later on by the window – and from her description of him, Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper, identifies him as Peter Quint, a former manservant who has recently died. According to Mrs. Grose, both Quint and Miss Jessel (the former governess, also dead) exerted a bad influence over the children. On an outing with young Flora, the governess, seeing Miss Jessel by the lake, becomes convinced that the ghosts have returned to possess the children. She recruits Mrs. Grose as an ally in the struggle to protect them. But the true menace is not clear until the governess realizes that Miles and Flora are deceiving her with their songs and games.

<u>Act II</u>

Quint and Miss Jessel argue. The governess feels lost. She is now sure that the children are in touch with the ghosts but cannot extract from either of them the confession she feels would save them. In horror at realizing that Miles knows as much as she does, or more, but unable to deal with the situation, the governess decides to leave Bly. Her impulse changes, however, when she sees Miss Jessel in the schoolroom, and she writes a letter imploring help from the children's uncle. Miles's dazzling display at the piano the next day gives his sister a chance to slip away. Flora is discovered by the lake and challenged to admit Miss Jessel's presence; her outburst of hatred causes her to be removed to London by Mrs. Grose. After spending the night listening to Flora's dreams pour out, the dubious housekeeper is enlightened. Left alone with Miles, the governess forces him to confess that he has stolen her letter. Quint reappears to battle for the boy's soul.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

manes (m ne z, Latin m n s) pl. noun (sometimes capital) (in Roman legend) <u>British Dictionary</u>
1. the spirits of the dead, often revered as minor deities
2. (functioning as singular) the shade of a dead person <u>Latin Dictionary</u>
I. The deified souls of the departed, the ghosts or shades of the dead, the gods of the Lower World, infernal deities, manes (as benevolent spirits, opp. to larvae and lemurea, malevolent spirits).

B. Esp., the departed spirit, ghost, shade of a person

A group of strangers share stories around a fire on Christmas Eve in an old house. Quoting our narrator: "It's not the first occurrence of its charming kind that I know to have involved a child. If the child gives the effect of another turn of the screw, what do you say to two children--?" "We say, of course, that they give two turns! Also that we want to hear about them." And thus, a group of friends are invited to hear the strange tale and reach their conclusions.

We will hear a story with a libretto with some poignant alterations to the original work: the Latin lesson has words, the children sing, and the ghosts speak. Particular attention should thus be given to all those choices. Henry James leaves the story open on purpose, and yet there are two clear ways to read it; Britten adds a layer that may tilt you further, give you one more turn.

The opening of Act II begins with a colloquy of Quint and Jessel. "The Second Coming," one of William Butler Yeats's most famous poems, is quoted here:

"The ceremony of innocence is drowned; The best lack all convictions, while the worst Are full of passionate intensity."

The nightmare Yeats presents feels strangely too close for comfort. He chose ambiguity, and Britten rides on it. James's story appeared in serial format between January and April of 1898. We can only assume that current events affected the storytelling and its end. Long forgotten by now, 1898 was the year the US declared war on Spain. The destructive power of humankind had spread to new territories, and it was not uncommon to find people thinking about Armageddon. The threat of the First World War loomed.

Although the Governess seeks to save the children, we will witness their destruction. A question lingers: who is the corruptor and who is the corrupted? If corruption is qualified by a young governess full of doubts, is she qualified to be the judge? Quint seeks a friend. Mrs. Grose condemned that friendship. Does that make them "bad"? Rage comes only out of Jessel, as she seeks a soul to revenge betrayal. Souls may die with the best of intentions...

The truth is in the eye of the beholder, and when the story finishes, we should have more questions than when it started. When the candle is out, we should reach our conclusions. We must be passionate about our convictions, and yet, be open to change them. That may be the only way to move forward and not drown. We must choose our own paths: may they be strange and bold.

-Chía Patiño, stage director

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Britten has organized the opera as a theme and variations. The theme, heard in the orchestra immediately after the prologue, is a sequence of twelve notes in a pattern based on the interval of a fourth. This fourth becomes synonymous with the world of Peter Quint, the ghosts, and the unreal world they inhabit. The world of innocence, in distinct contrast, is represented by traditional triadic harmony. Each act has eight scenes, each introduced by an orchestral variation on the theme. In addition, startling tonal opposites represent the contrast in the characters: the Governess and innocence have a minor (no sharps or flats) as a tonal center, while the Ghosts' signature key is a-flat minor (many flats). In the opera's last scene, these two keys are heard simultaneously as the struggle reaches its climax. Finally, Britten has chosen the celeste as the instrument to represent Peter Quint. Long before we meet him, and even when the text says otherwise, the sound of the celeste and the interval of a fourth tell us all is not what it seems.

(Previously published in the program for the University of Michigan production of The Turn of the Screw in xxxx)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Benjamin Britten (composer, 1913-1976) is the most important British composer since Henry Purcell nearly three centuries earlier. Works involving voice and text have consistently elicited Britten's most powerful and creative responses. Peter Grimes (1945) marked a turning point in his fame and established him forevermore in the international opera world. Soon after, however,

Britten began to write operas for more streamlined forces for practical and financial reasons. *Albert Herring, Rape of Lucretia, The Turn of the Screw*, and several operas for children are prominent among these chamber works. Since its premiere in 1954, *The Turn of the Screw* has been produced in eleven languages and has never spent a season out of the repertoire.

(*Previously published in the program for the Unversity of Michigan production of* The Turn of the Screw)

Myfanwy Piper (*librettist*, *1911-1997*), born Mary Myfanwy Evans in London, was a British art critic and opera librettist. From 1935 to 1937, she edited the periodical *Axis*, which was devoted to abstract art. She married artist John Piper in 1937. Between 1954 and 1973 she collaborated with the composer Benjamin Britten on several of his operas and, between 1977 and 1981, with

composer Alun Hoddinott on most of his operatic works. She was a friend of the poet John Betjeman, who wrote several poems addressing her, such as "Myfanwy" and "Myfanwy at Oxford."

- Adapted from Wikipedia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Tiffany Ng for organizing the carillon pre-show performances.





Kristen Barrett (*Production Stage Manager*) is a stage manager, stage director, and assistant director whose experience and familiarity with the operatic repertoire has placed her in demand at opera companies nationwide. Barrett has been part of the staging team on shows at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theater, the Dallas Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Palm Beach Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Calgary Opera, Indiana University Opera Theater, and the Spoleto Festival USA, among others. Barrett began her career as a performer after graduating from the San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, and Opera Sarasota before transitioning into production. She hails from Southern California and is a long-time resident of Chicago.

Brittany Crinson (*Wig, Hair, and Makeup Designer*) is the wigs, hair, and makeup designer for all of UProd. This is her first year as a full-time staff member as the hair and makeup manager. Crinson is thrilled to have moved back to Michigan, where she was born and raised. She has spent the last decade in Chicago working for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Joffrey Ballet, and several projects for TV and film, including the HBO MAX show Somebody Somewhere and Hulu's *The Bear.*

Elliot Foster (*1st Assistant Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be working at the University of Michigan for the first time. He is an AGMA stage manager with previous credits including Les Mamelles de Tirésias/Seven Deadly Sins, La Voix Humaine, Turn of the Screw (Curtis Institute of Music), The Elixir of Love (Florentine Opera), Alcina (Boston Early Music Festival), and Otello (Opera Philadelphia). He is a proud Floridian and advocate for protecting Florida springs and all nature across the United States. www.floridaspringscouncil.org

Kevin Judge (Scenic Designer) is an associate professor at

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

the University of Michigan. His credits include scenery for the Broadway production of Irena's Vow (Walter Kerr Theatre) as well as many other shows in New York City. Among these are Laugh It Up, Stare It Down (The Cherry Lane Theatre); Anthem (Baryshnikov Arts Center); Lovesick, The Revival, and FUBAR with Project Y; and Frankenstein (37 ARTS). Regionally, he has worked at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, La Jolla Playhouse, Delaware Theater Company, Dorset Theatre Festival, and Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater. He designed the scenery for Grammy Award-winner Esperanza Spalding's 2016 international tour. In addition to his theatre designs Kevin has also been a set designer on over 100 episodes of television, working on many shows including The Chosen (Lionsgate), The White House Plumbers (HBO), For Life (ABC), Manifest (NBC), Jessica Jones (Netflix), Blindspot (NBC), The Americans (FX), and Master of None (Netflix). He was also the associate designer on over 40 theatre productions with Alexander Dodge, including the Tony Award-nominated designs for A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder and Present Laughter. He received his MFA from the University of California, San Diego.

Shelby Loera (*Lighting Designer*) is thrilled to return to the University of Michigan for her sixth guest artist production. Select design credits: *Strike Up the Band* (Carnegie Hall), *Sweat* (Capital Rep), *Titanic* (NYU), *The Frogs* (Jazz Lincoln Center), *Sister Act* (the Muny), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Capital Rep), *Camelot* (the Muny), *The Sound of Music* (the Muny – first female lighting designer), and *Your Alice* (BAM Fisher and Edinburgh Fringe). Select associate credits: *The Big Gay Jamboree* (Orpheum Theatre), *Sunset Boulevard* (The Kennedy Center), *42nd Street* (Goodspeed), Verdi's *Rigoletto* (OSA), *Next to Normal* (WCP), *Dreaming Zenzile* (ArtsEmerson), and the Muny in St. Louis. USA 829. Shelbyloeradesign.com

Christianne Myers (Costume Designer) is the Claribel Baird

Halstead Collegiate Professor in the Department of Theatre & Drama and area head for design & production. More than 50 productions at U-M; favorites include: *Elizabeth Cree, Bernarda Alba, La Bohème, Candide, Night and Day, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Clybourne Park, Henry IV, Part I,* and *Caroline, or Change,* among others. New York: *Running Man, Oedipus, American Dreams: Lost & Found*; Theatreworks/ USA; the Public Theatre & Ma-Yi Ens.; Irondale Ens.; Lincoln Center Institute; the Juilliard School. Regional theatre: Santa Fe Opera, Detroit Public Theatre, Florentine Opera, Indiana Rep, Vermont Stage Co., Clarence Brown Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Opera Memphis. Other: BFA, Pace University; MFA, New York University.

Chía Patiño (*Director*) joined the Department of Voice & Opera as an assistant professor in the fall of 2024. After ten years as artistic and executive director of the National Theatre in Ecuador (Teatro Sucre), she returned to directing and teaching in the US. She believes in public service; in art as a way to raise questions that need to be asked and to remind us of passions that move us; and in hugs and laughters that keep us hopeful. With your permission: *"I am all things strange and bold, feathered with mischief ... I am the hidden life that stirs when the candle is out..."*

Kirk Severtson (*Conductor*) is professor of music in the Department of Voice & Opera, and he has served on the music staff as conductor and coach at numerous opera companies and festivals, including the Dallas Opera (including four world premieres), Lyric Opera of Kansas City, the Atlanta Opera, Opera Saratoga (eleven seasons), Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Opera Viva (Verona, Italy), Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival (Alaska), and the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, among others. Prior to his appointment at the University of Michigan, he taught at the Crane School of Music (State University of New York, Potsdam) for eighteen years, where he was the recipient of both the SUNY President's and Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Research and Creative

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

Endeavors. An active proponent of new works, he served as the inaugural music director for the Domenic J. Pellicciotti Opera Composition Prize, which commissioned and premiered works by Tom Cipullo and Martin Hennessey, among others, and has led numerous workshops of new operatic works. He is the executive director of the National Opera Association and holds degrees from the University of Cincinnati (DMA and MM) and Luther College.

Karin Waidley (Resident Dramaturg) is a teacher, artist, and scholar. She has degrees from Cal Berkeley, Northwestern, and University of Washington. Before receiving her PhD focusing on the use of theatre to prevent violence, she founded a theatre program for adjudicated youth outside of Boulder, Colorado. Waidley spent 12 years as a professor and the director of the theatre program at Western Colorado University, specializing in devising theatre for social justice. She has been awarded multiple grants and awards for developing new work in collaboration with students. Waidley was a Fulbright Scholar in 2017-18 and a Fulbright Specialist in 2022, both in Kenya. She recently worked as the director of education for the prevention of gender-based violence at the Community Safety Network in Jackson, Wyoming; as a visiting professor at Bucknell University and University of Redlands; and now as the resident dramaturg in University of Michigan's School of Music, Theatre & Dance. Waidley directs and dramaturgs regularly in both academic and professional settings, including a recent collaboration with the Theatre Company of Kenya at the Kenya International Theatre Festival. Her current research links storytelling and embodied performance practices with the neurobiology of trauma. She has published in Theatre/Practice, Texas Theatre Journal, Multilingual Margins, Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, and the Kenya International Theatre Journal. She is the editor for Theatre/Practice journal and is currently working with a Kenyan colleague on a book about Kenyan theatre history and contemporary performance.

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University Symphony Orchestra 2/2 | 7:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

Concert Band 2/4 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

Symphony Band 2/6 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

★ University of Michigan Dance Company 2025 2/6 - 2/9 | Power Center Department of Dance

University Philharmonia Orchestra 2/13 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

★ A Few Good Men 2/20 - 2/23 | Power Center Department of Theatre & Drama

★ The Government Inspector 2/20 - 2/23 | Arthur Miller Theatre Department of Musical Theatre Studio Production

University Symphony Orchestra & SMTD Choirs: "Scenes from the Life of a Martyr" 2/21 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

Jazz Ensemble & Jazz Lab Ensemble 2/27 | 8:00pm | Rackham Auditorium | FREE!

Concert Band 3/12 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

Symphony Band 3/19 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

University Symphony Orchestra 3/23 | 7:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

University Philharmonia Orchestra 3/26 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

★ **The Turn of the Screw** 3/27 - 3/30 | Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre Department of Voice & Opera

★ Our Oz 4/3 - 4/13 | Arthur Miller Theatre Department of Theatre & Drama ★ Jazz Showcase 4/3 | 8:00pm | The Ark (off- campus, tickets available at MUTO)

Chamber Choir 4/4 | Stamps Auditorium | 8:00pm | FREE!

★ Women's Glee Club Spring Concert 4/6 | 4:00pm | Hill Auditorium

Jazz Ensemble 4/10 | 8:00pm | Rackham Auditorium | FREE!

University Symphony Orchestra 4/11 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

★ Men's Glee Club Spring Concert 4/12 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium

Orpheus Singers 4/13 | 7:00pm | Stamps Auditorium | FREE!

Symphony Band 4/14 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

Concert Band 4/16 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

★ Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Senior Concert 4/17 - 4/19 | Dance Building | FREE! (tickets required)

★ Titanic: The Musical 4/17 - 4/20 | Power Center Department of Musical Theatre

University Philharmonia Orchestra 4/21 | 8:00pm | Hill Auditorium | FREE!

★ Musical Theatre Senior Showcase 5/4 | Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre Department of Musical Theatre

★ Ticketed Event

Bring a Group! Student group sales are available at \$11 a ticket. Contact our group sales desk at 734.763.3100 or email umsgroupsales@umich.edu.

For more information, visit **smtd.umich.edu/events** or scan below:



MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE