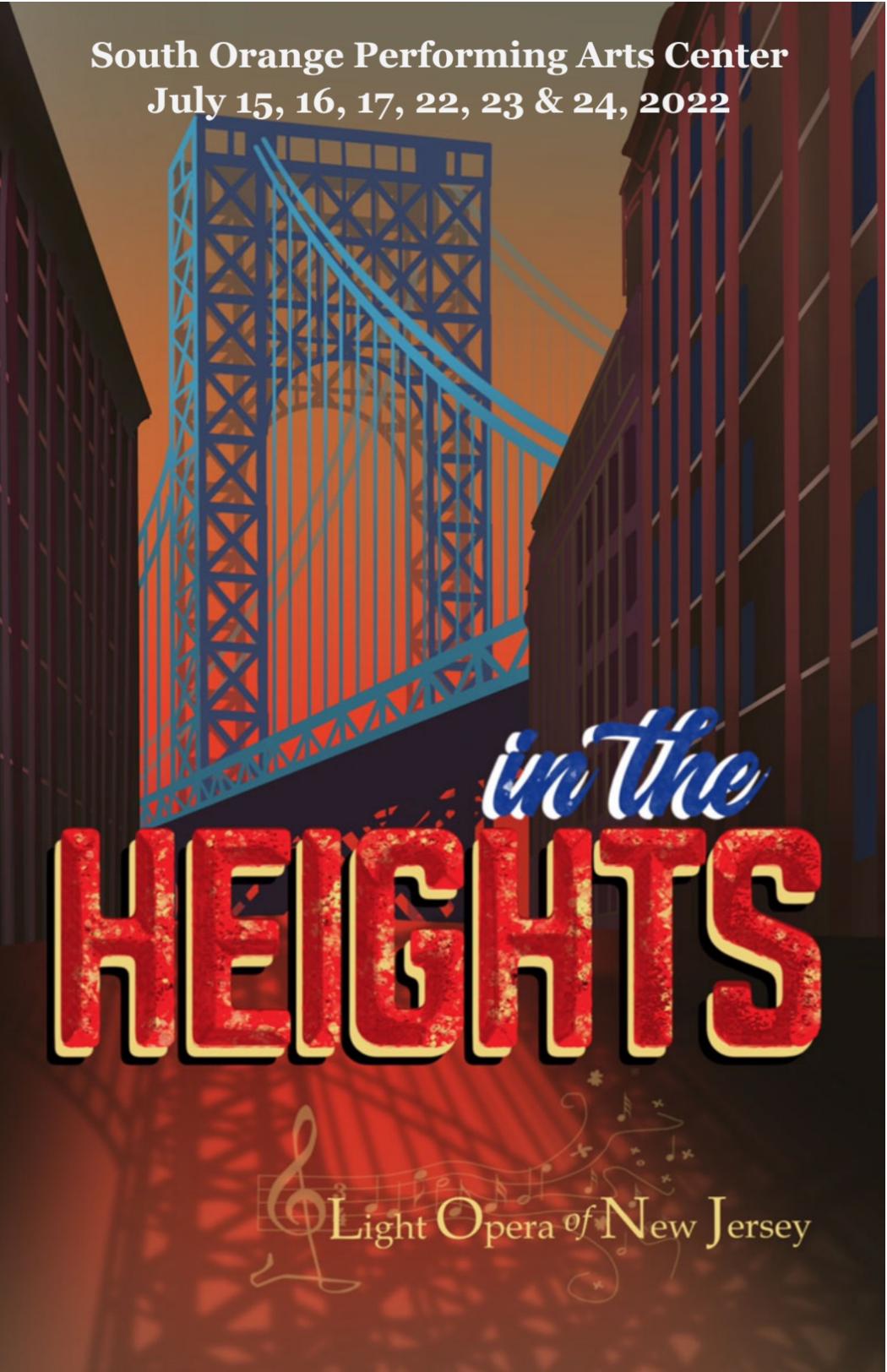


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**July 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 & 24, 2022**



*in the*  
**HEIGHTS**

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# Thank You!

(reflects donations made between July 1, 2021 and July 1, 2022)

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## *A Message from Light Opera of NJ's Executive Director Jason Tramm*



Dear Lovers of Art,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Light Opera of New Jersey's production of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights*. This production was originally planned for 2020 and was rescheduled due to the global pandemic; we have been waiting to tell this great American story for a long time! I want to thank our talented cast and production team who have worked tirelessly to bring this musical to life.

Please consider supporting the work of the Light Opera of New Jersey as we continue to bring the best of musical theater and opera to audiences in New Jersey. Sit back and enjoy your time in Washington Heights!

Sincerely,

Jason C. Tramm,  
Executive Director  
Light Opera of New Jersey

**Light Opera of New Jersey (LONJ)** is a premier operetta, opera, and musical theater company founded in 1995. LONJ is a registered, non-profit performing arts ensemble based in Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

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Light Opera of New Jersey  
proudly presents

# In the Heights

Lin-Manuel Miranda

Book by: Quiara Alegria Hudes

Directed by: Jeffrey Fiorello

Music Directed by: Gonzalo Valencia-Peña

Choreographed by: Hector Andres & Gregory Omar Osborne

Produced by: Jason Tramm

Production Stage Manager: Kevin Ohweiller

**Associate Producer**

*Joanna Hoty Russell*

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*Amy Lin*

**Costume Design**

*Jeffrey Fiorello*

**Costume Assistant,  
Hair and Makeup**

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**Costume Alterations**

*Beth Gleason*

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**Set Design, Construction & Logistics**

*Jerry Moses, Stephen Burke, Steven Bilenki*

***Special Thanks***

Trilogy Repertory, St. Mark's Episcopal Church

*This program is made possible, in part, by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and administered by the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission through the State/County Partnership Local Arts Program.*



## Meet the Performers



**\*Sydia Cedeno**  
*Abuela Claudia*



**\*Miguel Angel Sierra**  
*Usnavi*



**Valeria Aceves**  
*Vanesa*



**Nikki Ashe**  
*Nina*



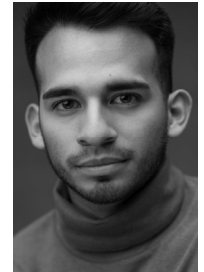
**Phillip Solomon**  
*Benny*



**Samy Cordero**  
*Carla*



**Tracey Haskell**  
*Daniela*



**Eduardo Delgado**  
*Sonny*



**Edgar Hidalgo**  
*Kevin*



**Victoria Ortiz**  
*Camila*



**Pedro Jimenez, Jr.**  
*Piragua Guy*



**Ariel Sanchez-Bello**  
*Graffiti Pete*  
*U/S Usnavi*

*\*The actor appears through the courtesy of Actor's Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

## *The Ensemble*



**Akash Bhide**  
*U/S Sonny*



**Sabrina Cabrera**  
*U/S Nina*



**Alyssa Fanelli**  
*U/S Camila*



**Jose Figueroa**



**Jonathan Guy**



**Taye McQueen**  
*U/S Vanessa*



**Viviana Renteria**



**Richard Rivera, Jr.**  
*U/S Graffiti Pete*



**Zariah Rivera**  
*U/S Carla*



**Will Sandoval**  
*U/S Piragua Guy & Kevin*



**Khajya Autumn Thomas**

## *Savoy Faire*

*Light Opera of NJ Outreach*



“Savoy Faire” is an ensemble of featured artists from Light Opera of New Jersey, who are focused on community outreach.

The primary goal of Savoy Faire is to educate and enlighten audiences of all ages while providing top-notch entertainment.

This program is perfect for libraries and senior centers because it's both educational and entertaining, transporting the audience back to the Victorian period in England with music and humor.

Our program features well-known classics and hidden gems from the operettas of Sir W.S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. We've performed for all ages ranging from after-school programs to senior living facilities.

We tailor our programs to suit each audience. For children, the program is more interactive, with cast members demonstrating how to use props such as Japanese fans from LONJ's production of *The Mikado*. Kids are also encouraged to ask questions to satisfy their insatiable curiosity.

Savoy Faire's musical outreach is encapsulated in these two famous quotes: The great American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: “Music is the universal language of mankind.” The great English playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton: “Music, once admitted to the soul, becomes a sort of spirit, and never dies.” We share the universal language of music that was so delightfully and deftly communicated by Gilbert and Sullivan with new generations in hopes that it will never die. We strive to lighten the hearts of our audience members and to touch their souls, providing them a brief respite from today's hectic world. For more information, email us at [info@lonj.org](mailto:info@lonj.org).

# In the Heights

Cast of Characters (In Order of Appearance)

Graffiti Pete..... Ariel Sanchez-Bello  
Usnavi ..... \*Miguel Angel Sierra  
Piragua Guy ..... Pedro Jimenez, Jr.  
Abuela Claudia..... \*Sydia Cedenio  
Carla ..... Samy Cordero  
Daniela ..... Tracey Haskell  
Kevin ..... Edgar Hidalgo  
Camila ..... Victoria Ortiz  
Sonny ..... Eduardo Delgado  
Benny ..... Phillip Solomon  
Vanessa ..... Valeria Aceves  
Nina..... Nikki Ashe

*\*The Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

## **The Ensemble**

Akash Bhide, Sabrina Cabrera,  
Alyssa Fanelli, Jose Figueroa, Jonathan Guy,  
Taye McQueen, Viviana Renteria, Richard Rivera, Jr.,  
Zariah Rivera, Will Sandoval, Khajya Autumn Thomas

*On Saturday July 16 the Role of Nina will be played by Sabrina Cabrera*

## **The Orchestra**

Joseph Christianson, Trumpet I  
Bruce DeLaCruz, Keyboard II  
Ansy Francois, Reed I  
Starlyn Lopez, Trombone I  
John Moroney, Electric Bass  
Matt Troyano, Guitars  
Gonzalo Valencia-Peña, Keyboard I  
Jonathan Ward, Drums  
Joe Whitfield, Percussion

Gonzalo Valencia-Peña, *Music Director*

# Settings

## ACT I

Scene 1: Washington Heights - sunrise  
IN THE HEIGHTS..... Usnavi & Company

Scene 2: On the Street  
BREATHE..... Nina & Company

Scene 3: Rosario's Car Service  
BENNY'S DISPATCH ..... Benny & Nina

Scene 4: The Street  
IT WON'T BE LONG NOW ..... Vanessa, Usnavi & Sonny

Scene 5: The Dispatch Booth  
INUTIL (Useless) ..... Kevin

Scene 6: The Salon  
NO ME DIGA..... Daniela, Carla, Vanessa & Nina

Scene 7: Inside the Bodega; the Street  
96,000 ..... Usnavi, Benny, Sonny, Vanessa, Daniela, Carla & Co.

Scene 8: The Street  
PACIENCIA Y FE (Patience and Faith) ..... Abuela Claudia & Co.

Scene 9: Abuela Claudia's Stoop- early evening  
WHEN YOU'RE HOME ..... Nina, Benny & Company

Scene 10: The Street- dusk  
PIRAGUA..... Piragua Guy

Scene 11: The Rosario Household  
SIEMPRE (Always) ..... Camila & Bolero Singer

Scene 12: The Club  
THE CLUB ..... Company  
BLACKOUT ..... Company

♦ *Intermission* ♦

# Settings

## ACT II

Scene 1: Benny's Fire Escape - Sunday morning

SUNRISE ..... Nina, Benny & Ensemble

Scene 2: Outside The Bodega; the Rosario Fire Escape

Scene 3: Interior of Usnavi and Abuela's Apartment

HUNDREDS OF STORIES ..... Abuela Claudia & Usnavi

Scene 4: Outside the Dispatch Booth

ENOUGH ..... Camila

Scene 5: The Street

CARNAVAL DEL BARRIO ..... Daniela & Company

Scene 6: The Dispatch Booth

ATENCION ..... Kevin

Scene 7: The Street

ALABANZA ..... Usnavi, Nina & Company

Scene 8: The Street- later that afternoon

EVERYTHING I KNOW ..... Nina

Scene 9: Outside the Salon

NO ME DIGA (REPRISE) ..... Daniela, Carla & Vanessa

Scene 10: The Street

PIRAGUA (REPRISE) ..... Piragua Guy

Scene 11: The Bodega

CHAMPAGNE..... Vanessa & Usnavi

Scene 12: The Dispatch Booth

WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN..... Nina & Benny

Scene 13: A Shady Alleyway - late at night

Scene 14: The Street- Monday morning, sunrise

FINALE ..... Usnavi & Company

# Biographies

**Valeria Aceves** (Vanessa) - Ms. Aceves is thrilled to be in this production of *In the Heights* with Light Opera of New Jersey. A graduate of The Neighborhood Playhouse in Manhattan, she studied theatre and the Meisner technique. Her vocal teachers include Larissa Urbina, Claudia Montiel and Andrea DelGiudice, for whom she is eternally grateful. Valeria proudly hails from Mexico, and has appeared in the following productions: *Ruta 13* (Carmina) written by Jimena Merodio, *Some Girl(s)* (Bobbi) in the Forum El Juglar. Recently, she was seen in the production of *Dance Nation* (Amina) at the Rita Morgenthau Theatre in New York City.

**Nikki Ashe** (Nina) – Nikki is beyond excited to be making her debut with Light Opera of New Jersey and even more thrilled to be performing one of her dream roles (Nina). Previous shows include *RENT* (Mimi), *In the Heights* (Vanessa), *Once on This Island* (Ti Moune), *Songs for a New World* (Woman #1), *Legally Blonde* (Serena), *American Idiot* (Extraordinary Girl), and *Dreamgirls* (Michelle). Endless thanks to her mom, dad, brother, and Kira for keeping her “sane.” Love and appreciation to the entire cast and crew for making this an amazing experience with an incredible cast filled with friends both new and old. Break a leg!

**Akash Bhide** (Ensemble/Sonny U/S) - Akash is extremely excited to return to the stage with Light Opera of New Jersey. He has previously performed with LONJ in *Ragtime: The Musical* (Ensemble). He graduated from Wesleyan University this past May with a BA in computer science and theater. He would like to thank his parents, sister, grandparents, and girlfriend, Caitlin, for their never-ending support.

**Sabrina Cabrera** (Ensemble/Nina U/S) - This is Sabrina’s first show with LONJ and she is thrilled to finally put it on the stage since postponement in 2020. Some of her favorite roles include: *Carrie the Musical* (Carrie) *Into the Woods* (Cinderella) *The Wild Party* (Ensemble). *In the Heights* is a dream show and she is so proud to be a part of the familia. She thanks her loving family and friends for their support.

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**Sydia Cedeño** (Abuela Claudia) rep-About Artists AEA/SAG - Sydia is overjoyed to make her debut with Light Opera of New Jersey after a 2 year wait. Favorite credits include: *In the Heights* (Abuela) Gallery Players, *On Your Feet* (Consuelo) Gateway Playhouse, *Natural Causes* (Dr. Spencer) Fringe international Play Festival, *Cahoots* (Lois) Theater for the New City, *A Pirate's Lullaby* (Anne Bonney) Producers Club, *La Viuda Alegre* (CanCan Girl) Repertorio Español, *Gypsy* (Mazeppa) Irvington Players, *Tartuffe* (Dorine) H.O.L.A., and *Errol and Fidel* (Mima) Playwrights Horizon where she won Best Individual Performance for the NY Musical Festival. She will appear in the North Carolina Theatre production of *On Your Feet* in August. Sydia sends special thanks to her husband Scott Genat, and Cecilia Vanti. Para Mamá.

**Samy Cordero** (Carla) - Samy Cordero is so excited to be making her Light Opera of NJ debut! Favorite theatre credits include *Spring Awakening* (Wendla), *Carrie The Musical* (Sue), *Heathers the Musical* (Veronica), and *Runaways* at the ATA Theatre in New York. Samy has also sung in multiple New York cabarets at Don't Tell Mama's, The Triad, and The Metropolitan Room. Samy is a rising senior at Webster Conservatory of Theatre Arts pursuing a degree in Acting. She was most recently seen in Webster's Production of *Amélie* in the role of Suzanne.

**Eduardo Delgado** (Sonny) - Eduardo is excited to make his debut performance with LONJ. He recently graduated with a BA in Theatre from Rowan University. A proud Ecuadorian who cannot wait to show off his latinidad for you all. He would like to thank his incredible support system for all their love, this is for y'all! Feel free to follow him on Instagram, Lilbeefcake\_

**Chris Dzerovych** (Prop Design) - Chris is the President of the LONJ Production Board. A graduate of Clark University (BA) and Boston College (MBA), she now volunteers on a regular basis for arts and environmental organizations. She was a Co-Producer for *Die Fledermaus*. She assists with grant applications, and lends a hand with props and set design on many LONJ productions.

**Alyssa Fanelli** (Ensemble, Camila U/S) - Alyssa is so excited for her debut on the LONJ stage! She is known for her Musical Directing and Choreography at Whippany Park High School but has also been in shows such as *Bring it On!* (Campbell), *Urinetown* (Little Becky Two Shoes) and *Legally Blonde* (Enid Hoopes). She is very happy to be back on stage for the first time in 4 years!

**Jose Figueroa** (Ensemble) – Jose is ecstatic to be performing in his favorite musical, *In the Heights!* Credits include *Smokey Joe's Café* (Ken Track), *Chess* (Ensemble), *A Few Good Men* (Santiago), *Once Upon a Mattress* (Sir Studley) and *Standing on Ceremony: Gay Marriage Plays*.

**Jeffrey Fiorello** (Director) – Jeffrey is excited to direct for LONJ again. For LONJ Jeff previously directed *Ragtime*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *A Little Night Music*. Other directing credits include: *August Osage County*, *Cabaret*, *Barnum*, *H2\$*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Spring Awakening*, *Legally Blonde*, *Summer of '42*, and *Gypsy* to name a few. Some of Jeff's performance credits include: *The Secret Garden* (Archie & Neville), *Chicago* (Mary Sunshine), *Rent* (Mark), *The Baker's Wife* (Dominique), *Blood Brothers* (Eddie), *A Man of No Importance* (Robbie), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Simon & Annas), and the title role in *Jekyll & Hyde*. Jeff would like to thank the cast, crew, production and all of the LONJ family for their hard work, dedication and support.

**Beth Gleason** (Costume Assistant/Hair & Make Up/Prop Design) – graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, where she studied the Stanislavski acting technique. Beth has directed, choreographed and performed with numerous area theater groups. She was nominated for two Rising Star Awards by The Paper Mill Playhouse as a director and as a choreographer, and was awarded the Fred Scheff Theater Award from Stony Hill Players. She is also a member of the LONJ Production Board.

**Jonathan Guy** (Ensemble) – Jonathan is excited to return to the stage after many years, in one of his favorite musicals. Past credits include *Footloose*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Annie*, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Thanks to the production team for giving him the opportunity to sing these songs outside of the car and the shower.

**Tracey Lynne Haskell** (Daniela) - Tracey is beyond thrilled to finally live out her Daniela dreams on the SOPAC stage! Previously with LONJ, Tracey was featured in *Ragtime* (Sarah's Friend), *Hunchback* (Woman 5), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Chorus), and *Sweeney Todd* (Quintet). Favorite featured roles include *The Life* (Sonya), *WSS* (Anita), *Songs for a New World* (Woman 2), *Starmites* (Diva/Mother), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Armelia), *Falsettos* (Dr. Charlotte), *The Nance* (Carmen), *The Robber Bridegroom* (Rosamund), *Nine* (Luisa), *A New Brain* (Lisa), *Footloose*

(Vi Moore), *Once on This Island* (Mama Euralie), *Porgy and Bess* (Strawberry Woman), *Into the Woods* (The Witch), *Bat Boy* (Meredith). Much love to the incredible cast and creative team for this beautiful experience. More than ever, the arts give us meaning and it fills my heart to be able to share these spaces again.

**Edgar Hidalgo** (Kevin) – Edgar is very excited to make his LONJ debut in *In the Heights!* Recent stage credits include *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Aldolpho), *Suessical* (General Genghis Khan Schmitz), *Mary Poppins* (Admiral Boom/Bank Chairman/Ensemble), *Legally Blonde* (Dewey/Ensemble), *Mamma Mia* (Ensemble), *Once Upon A Mattress* (Ensemble), *South Pacific* (Ensemble), *H2\$* (Johnson/Davis), and *Anything Goes* (Bishop/Ensemble). Prior directorial credits include the CDC Theatre's productions of *Chess*, for which he won the 2020 Perry Award for Best Director, *The Vagina Monologues*, and *Standing on Ceremony: The Gay Marriage Plays*. When he is not busy with theatre, Edgar is a privacy, technology and intellectual property lawyer. He dedicates this performance to his family, but especially his dad, mom and Abuela Eva.

**Pedreo L. Jimenez, Jr.** (Piragua Guy) - Pedro is excited and thankful to make his debut with Light Opera of New Jersey and SOPAC in this production of *ITH* that he has waited two years to bring to life. Some of his previous roles include: *Batboy* (Rev. Hightower) with OLT- garnishing him the prestigious Perry Award, *The Little Mermaid* (Sebastian) at the Rhino Theater, *Oliver* (Bill Sykes), and *Seussical the Musical* (Horton) with the YM-YWHA of NJ. During the day, Pedro is an Ingest Operator for NBCUniversal and a cantor at his church. He dedicates this performance to his amazing wife Shavon and his true boss - their son Benjamin. "Thank you for putting up with my time away. I love you both to infinity and beyond! God is good!"

**Taye McQueen** (Ensemble, Vanessa U/S) - is so excited to make her LONJ debut and thanks Jeffrey and Kevin for the opportunity. Favorite roles include: *Dreamgirls* (Effie White), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Charlaine), *Rent* (Mimi), *If/Then* (Kate), *Laugh Out Loud (Cry Quietly)* (Shelly). Special thanks to her parents, Gladys and Steven McQueen and her mentor Mona Patel for always challenging her in new ways. To her best friend Devin, "I love you in case I die," your love and support is invaluable. She dedicates all her moments on stage to Rosaria Andracka, her mentor, second mom, and guardian angel. Enjoy the show!!! IG: @\_TayeMcQueen



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**Jerry Moses** (Set Design, Construction & Logistics) - Jerry has been designing and building sets for many New Jersey theater companies since 1994. For LONJ, Jerry was responsible for set construction of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* in 2014, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* in 2017, *Daughter of the Regiment* in 2018, *Così fan Tutte* in 2019, *Die Fledermaus* in 2020 and *La Bohème* in 2022. Jerry also serves as a member of the LONJ Production Board.

**Kevin Ohlweiler** (Production Stage Manager) - Kevin is very excited to be returning to Light Opera of New Jersey! Kevin was on stage with LONJ in *Sweeney Todd* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. He also served as the production manager of *Ragtime*. Kevin stage managed *Appropriate* at Studio Playhouse in Montclair for which he received his first NJACT Perry Nomination. Kevin would like to thank Jeff and LONJ for this opportunity, and also his family and friends for their constant support.

**Victoria Angela Ortiz** (Camila) - Victoria is thrilled to be a part of Light Opera of New Jersey's Production of *In the Heights*. She is fresh off her performance in *A Message from Saturn* (Principal) written and directed by Eli Yamin, with its debut at the Marcus Garvey Amphitheater in Harlem (NYC 2021). Since the age of 11, Victoria has been performing in Musical Theatre, with her earliest performances taking place at The Pocono Playhouse Theater. With a degree in vocal performance, Victoria joined "Vocal Productions NYC" opera company for various full length productions. Victoria has sung and performed in venues all over New York City with genres including classical, jazz, rock, top 40, Latin jazz and more. Victoria released her first single in March of this year and hopes to put out her first full length album in 2023. Victoria looks forward to seeing her family in the audience.

**Gregory Omar Osborne** (Assistant Choreographer) - Gregory is filled with excitement to be working in the community of Maplewood/South Orange which he calls home. Gregory has an extensive resume as both Performer and Director/Choreographer. Visit [gregoryomarosborne.com](http://gregoryomarosborne.com) for more info and/or follow @goo\_inc on Social Media platforms.

**Mark Reilly** (Lighting Design) - Mark Reilly is happy to be back with Light Opera of NJ at SOPAC, previously designing for *Ragtime* in 2019. Recent lighting design credits include *Bright Star* (Summit Playhouse), *Tuck Everlasting* (Chatham Playhouse), *Newsies*, *Spring Awakening* and *American Idiot* (CDC Theatre), and many plays for The Theater Project. Mark is the recipient of two Perry Awards for lighting design. Thank you to Ed Whitman for his help on this show.

**Viviana Renteria** (Ensemble) – Viviana is a Colombian and Mexican actress recently graduated from The Musical and Dramatic Academy. She is delighted to be part of Light Opera of New Jersey's *In the Heights* as her first show in the US. You can also find her on Instagram as @vivianarenteria.a

**Zariah Rivera** (Ensemble, Carla (U/S) - Ms. Rivera is beyond excited for her debut with Light Opera of New Jersey as a cast member of *In the Heights!* She is a rising senior at Marymount Manhattan College studying Musical Theater. She has been in productions such as *Grease* (Cha Cha), *Mamma Mia* (Donna), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Muzzy), and *Anything Goes* (Reno Sweeney). She would like to thank the production team for this opportunity.

**Joanna Hoty Russell** (Associate Producer) – singer, stage/music director, educated at The Cleveland Institute of Music. Joanna began her affiliation with LONJ in 1998, has served on the Board of Trustees and is former President of the Production Board. Past credits include: Associate Producer/Stage Manager: *La Boheme* and *Die Fledermaus*; Director/Producer of *Savoy Faire*, LONJ's travelling troupe; (Director) *The Telephone*, *The True Story of Cinderella*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. *The Tale of Sweeney Todd* (Ensemble), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Muzzy), *The Magic Flute* (2<sup>nd</sup> Lady), *Footloose* (Vi Moore). Additionally, Joanna conducts and serves as soloist for *Shir Libeinu Choir* (Temple Sinai, Summit NJ) and is the principal singer for the Early Music Players of NJ.

**Ariel Sanchez-Bello** (Graffiti Pete, Usnavi U/S) - Ariel Sanchez-Bello is ecstatic to be making his LONJ debut! Ariel is a Pandemic Class of 2020 Graduate of AMOA. Recently seen in *Tuck Everlasting* (Ensemble), *Newsies* (Romeo), *West Side Story* (Ensemble), and *In the Heights* (Usnavi De La Vega). Ariel sends so much love to his ITH familia, his beautiful girlfriend Julianne, and to his Streetlight Collective. No Pare, Sigue Sigue!

**Will Sandoval** (Ensemble, Kevin and Piragua Guy U/S) - Will is thrilled to be joining LONJ for the first time! Favorite past shows/roles include: *Harvey* (Sanderson) at Dover Little Theatre, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Jimmy) at Brundage Park Playhouse, *Lucky Stiff* (Harry) at Edison Valley Playhouse, and *Avenue Q* (Bad Idea Bear) at Old Library Theatre. Will is an EMC membership candidate. He would like to thank his wife, Amy, and son, Derek, for their love and support and dedicates this performance to his parents.

**Miguel Angel Sierra** (Usnavi) - Miguel is honored to get back on stage and make his Light Opera of New Jersey debut with his all-time dream role. You may have seen him in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Valentin) at South Mountain Theatreworks. He is a proud alumnus of the Marymount Manhattan theater program. Previous roles include: *Toxic Avenger* (Toxie/Melvin), *Joseph... Dreamcoat* (Joseph), Lippa's *The Wild Party* (Mr. Black), and in the Puerto Rico premiere of *Aida* (Radames). He is beyond grateful to his wife, Nadiene, and baby Aria for all the patience and sacrifice it took in allowing him to realize his dream. He thanks the LONJ creative team for the opportunity and the cast for the wonderful journey. He sends his friends and family all the love in the world for supporting him.

**Phillip Solomon** (Benny) - Born in Brooklyn, NY, Phillip Solomon has had dancing and performing ingrained in him from a very young age. The son of two musicians, Phillip has utilized his natural talent and ability to devote himself to his craft and the art of performance, choreographing for studios and colleges throughout the tri-state area. As a singer, dancer, and actor, Phil has performed in productions of *RENT*, *The Wild Party*, and *Altar Boyz*, in addition to being featured on the TODAY show and National campaigns on MTV. Dedicated to helping young performers reach their full potential, he has been recognized on both the regional and national level for his choreography in the genres of hip hop, street jazz, and musical theatre.

**Denise Szabo** (Production Coordinator, Program) – hired in 2019 by LONJ after a 35-year career in local government, most recently having held the position of Municipal Clerk/Assistant Administrator in Bernards Township. Having always been a supporter of the performing arts and LONJ, she is delighted to be part of the team and a member of the Production Board. Denise runs every integral internal part of the LONJ machine with a smile and is an essential part of the company's success.

**Khajya Autumn Thomas** (Ensemble) - Point Park University graduate, and recent Broadway Dance Center alumna Khajya Autumn Thomas is a classical ballet dancer and Chicago native. Recent appearances include New York Theatre Barn's (NYTB) *Choreography Lab*, performing work by Zanza Steinberg. After making the big move to New York City early 2022, Ms. Thomas is elated to make her Musical Theatre debut with Light Opera of New Jersey.



***Opera Arias and Broadway Songs in Concert***  
*Opera Is for Everyone*

## **2022 Spring Season**

***Love, Death and  
Redemption***

*March 27 - 3:00 pm*  
*The Mansion, Fairleigh  
Dickinson University*  
*Madison, NJ*

***International  
Vocal Competition***

*May 1 - 3:00 pm*  
*Location TBD*

## **Save the Date**

***40th Anniversary Celebration***

*September 18 - 2:00 pm*  
*The Mansion, Fairleigh Dickinson University*  
*Madison, NJ*

**Tickets and Info:**

**operaatflorham.org**

**973-443-8620**

**info@operaatflorham.org**



**In residence at Fairleigh  
Dickinson University since  
1982, Madison NJ**

**Jason Tramm** (Producer) – Maestro Tramm's work in the operatic, symphonic and choral realms have received critical acclaim throughout the United States and abroad. In addition to his new position of Executive Director of LONJ, he is a leader in the arts community holding the following appointments; Associate Professor at Seton Hall University, Dir. of Music at the Great Auditorium, Music Director, Taghkanic Chorale and Artistic Director of MidAtlantic Artistic Productions. He has led symphonic and operatic performances in Italy, Romania, Hungary and has important symphonic debuts in Austria and the Czech Republic in 2023. This season he appears with Nickel City Opera, Adelphi Orchestra, National Chorale, North Shore Music Festival and the newly formed Beethoven Fest NYC. He also hosts Music Matters with Jason Tramm, a popular podcast on YouTube.

**Gonzalo Valencia-Peña** (Music Director) – Gonzalo is a proud immigrant, loving husband to his incredible wife, Danielle, and an AP physics teacher at Jose Marti STEM Academy. Since 2003, he has been writing original music, lyrics, arranging, music directing, playing piano, and acting on many different projects. In that time, he has had readings, concerts, workshops, and productions of his original work performed at 54 Below, The Duplex, Montclair State University, Rutgers University/NJIT, 4th Wall Theatre, and Bergen County Performing Arts Center. Currently, he is excited to be working on an original musical with his writing partner, Michael Campbell. The show is called "Goblins & Gates" and you can check out the concept album on Spotify. For more information on all upcoming projects, please check out gonzalovalencia.com.



### **Upcoming Performances**

#### **In the Heights**

*By Lin-Manuel Miranda*

July 15, 16, 22, 23, 2022 at 8 PM

July 17, 24, 2022 at 2 PM

South Orange Performing Arts Center, South Orange, NJ

#### **Candide Operetta (In Concert)**

*By Leonard Bernstein*

October 22, 2022 at 8 PM

October 23, 2022 at 3 PM

Dorothy Young Center for Performing Arts, Madison, NJ

#### **Don Giovanni**

*By Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*

February 24, 2023 at 7:30 PM

February 26, 2023 at 2:30 PM

Fellowship Cultural Arts Center, Basking Ridge, NJ

#### **A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder**

*By Robert L. Freedman*

July 14-16 and July 21-23, 2023

South Orange Performing Arts Center, South Orange, NJ

*More Info and Tickets: <https://lightoperaofnewjersey.org>*