

# MODERN VINTAGE OPERA

Presents

# Werther



By Jules Massenet

**January 26, 2024, 7:30pm**

**January 28, 2024, 3:00pm**

**Litchfield**

**Intermediate School**

**35 Plumb Hill Rd**

**Litchfield, CT**

**February 2, 2024, 7:30pm**

**February 4, 2024, 3:00pm**

**Eno Memorial Hall**

**754 Hopmeadow St**

**Simsbury, CT**

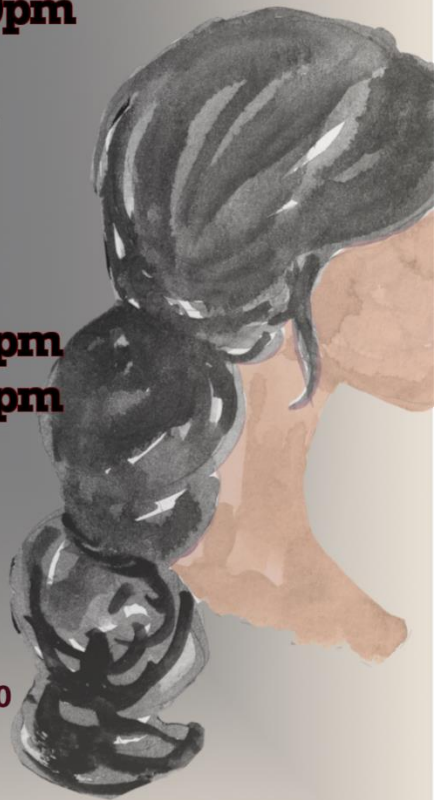
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# *Modern Vintage Opera*

Presents

# *Werther*

**Opera by Jules Massenet**

The story is based on Goethe's epistolary novel [The Sorrows of Young Werther](#), which was based both on fact and on Goethe's own early life.

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**Simsbury, CT**



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## *About the Opera*

“Werther” is an interesting enigma. Infamous for its historical impact and deemed “toxic” by a modern lens, it’s also a poignant reflection of the eternal tension between passion and societal expectations. Upon exploring the story, I couldn’t help but resonate with Werther’s need for a simpler life and understand the tragic quality of it clashing with the rigid demands of the world. In Massenet’s opera, this tension becomes a captivating dance between the characters and each of them embodies a different facet of that struggle: Charlotte emerges as a compelling figure with her own desires and complexities. Torn between desire and societal expectations, she becomes a captivating counterpoint to Werther. Sophie’s unshakable childlike bliss and Albert’s embodiment of the stern grip of duty offer further angles on this timeless struggle as well, making it richer.

The very spirit of creation and collaboration echoes in our journey to bring this story to life. Just as Werther and Charlotte’s love blossoms through distant letters, our production bridged physical barriers through sheer artistic will and desire to create. I feel very honored to be making my directorial debut alongside this brave group of artists and humans.

## *Meet Our Music Director*

**Blake Hansen** (Music Director /Accompanist) Blake Hansen is a versatile musician who performs internationally as a soloist, collaborative artist, chamber



musician, répétiteur, vocal coach, and conductor. Blake has appeared in many notable venues around the world, including Carnegie Hall, Steinway Hall in NYC, Teatro Municipal de Niterói in Brazil, The Bushnell in Connecticut, and the Illsley Ball Nordstrom Hall in Seattle. Blake is a much sought-after vocal accompanist for choirs, opera, and music theater. He collaborates as a répétiteur, coach, and music director with CT Lyric Opera, Salt Marsh Opera, Hartford Opera Theater, Opera Theater of CT, Madison Lyric Stage, Greve Opera

Academy in Italy, and Modern Vintage Opera. In addition to opera, Blake is also a very active choral accompanist and director. He has appeared with many of the leading professional choral ensembles in CT, including CONCOR, Voce, and Concinnity, and has for 5 years been the assistant conductor and accompanist for the New Haven Chorale. He currently accompanies and coaches at UConn and the Hartt School.



# *The Cast and Crew*

Werther  
Charlotte

Daniel Kamalić  
Julie Rumbold (1/26, 2/4)  
Rebecca de Almeida (1/28, 2/2)

Sophie  
Albert

Chelsea Lorraine  
Liam Shannon

Set  
Backstage  
Lighting  
Audio Recording  
Subtitles  
Promotion

Peter Hoople, Aversa Sheldon, Ray Lewis  
Ray Lewis  
Zack Capitao  
Michael Goldberg  
Rebecca McFarland, Aversa Sheldon  
Jan Sherlock, Cathy Rumbold, Rebecca  
McFarland, Julie Rumbold  
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# *Werther Synopsis*

## **ACT 1**

The eldest daughter of the widowed Bailiff, Charlotte, had promised her dying mother that she would marry Albert. At the opening, Albert is traveling and not currently in town, so Charlotte is escorted to the evening ball by the young poet named Werther. When Werther arrives, he speaks enthusiastically while spying on Charlotte prior to departing for the ball. When Albert returns unexpectedly after a six-month trip, he finds Charlotte not at home. He is reassured and consoled by Charlotte's younger sister, Sophie. That night after the ball, Werther confesses that he has fallen in love with Charlotte, but before he reveals that to her, he realizes that Albert has returned home. Werther becomes discouraged but insists that Charlotte remain faithful to her promise to marry Albert.

## **ACT 2**

Three months later, Charlotte and Albert are now married. As they walk happily through town, a disconsolate Werther follows behind. Albert and Sophie try their best to cheer him up, but they are unable to lift Werther's spirits. Later, Werther talks with Charlotte about their first meeting. Charlotte is worried about his well-being and urges him to leave town until Christmas. Dejected, Werther mopes away and starts to contemplate committing suicide. Sophie manages to catch up to him and interrupts his destructive thought process. After shouting at her, he runs off leaving Sophie in tears. Albert realizes that Werther must be in love with Charlotte, which would explain his erratic behavior.

**\*\* Intermission \*\***



# Werther Synopsis

## ACT 3

At home, alone, on Christmas Eve, Charlotte spends time rereading the letters from Werther. She is overcome with emotion and prays for strength. Sophie tries to cheer up her older sister. Suddenly Werther returns and surprises her. When Werther begins to read a passage from his translation of Ossain, an excerpt about the poet foreseeing his own death, Charlotte begs him to quit reading. Then it dawns on Werther that she must love him too. When he goes to embrace her, she runs away as she says her last goodbye. Werther is overcome with sadness. He decides to take his life to end his emotional agony. When Albert returns home, he receives a message from Werther requesting to borrow his pistols, explaining he is going on an extended trip. Charlotte has a terrible premonition and runs out of her house hoping to reach Werther before it is too late.

## ACT 4

Charlotte bursts into Werther's home only to find that, to her horror, Werther is lying on the ground mortally wounded. Charlotte consoles him by declaring her love and begs for his forgiveness. While breathing his life's last breaths, a chorus of children sings.

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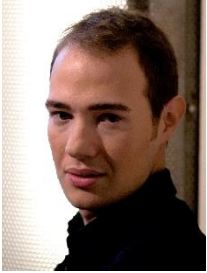
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# Meet Our Performers

**Daniel Kamalić** (Werther), lyric-dramatic tenor, has been praised for his “silver-toned” (Chris Ruel, OperaWire), “big, stunning voice” (Chris Buchanan, Berkshire Fine Arts). About his performance in Buffalo Opera Unlimited’s *La Bohème*, Peter Hall of Buffalo Rising wrote “This opera depends on three upper register voices and here they deliver. The tenor voice of Rodolfo ... fills Rockwell Hall...” Daniel’s busy 2022-23 season also included the roles of Don José in *Carmen* with both Opera Theater of CT and NYC’s The Opera Next Door, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* with both CT Lyric Opera and New Rochelle Opera, King Kaspar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with Opera CT, Beadle Bamford in



*Sweeney Todd* with Madison Lyric Stage, Mr. Gobineau in *The Medium* with Buffalo Opera Unlimited, two new operas: Jarrar’s *The Cask of Amontillado* at NYC’s Emerging Artist Theater and Santelli’s *The Silk City* at New Jersey’s Garden State Opera, plus concert soloist engagements with the Croton Chorale, Danbury Symphony Orchestra, NYC’s Libero Canto, and a recital of 1920’s musical theater songs with the Cornerstone Playhouse in Rhode Island. This April, he will make his Lincoln Center debut in Marshall Opera’s Oral History Project. [www.kamalic.com](http://www.kamalic.com)

**Julie Rumbold** (Charlotte: 1/26, 2/4), mezzo-soprano, has been described, by artistic and music directors, as enthusiastic and extremely talented with a solid vocal technique. She has been seen featured in Operas, Operettas and Concerts throughout Southern New England. Julie has performed with Modern Vintage Opera, Berkshire Opera Festival, CT Lyric Opera, Madison Lyric Stage, The Whitney Center for the Arts MA, Lollipop Opera, Greylock Opera MA, Contemporary Theater Company RI, Simsbury Light Opera Company and CT Gilbert and Sullivan Society. She has studied and performed with New England Opera Intensive in Boston and at the International Music Festival in Vols am Schlern, Italy. In 2016 she was a finalist for American Opera Idol with Opera Connecticut. A few operatic credits include La Zia Principessa in *Suor Angelica*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Eboli (*Don Carlo*), Marie-Thérèse in the premier of the opera *The Weeping Woman*, Elle in *La voix humaine*, Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* and the title role in *Princess Ida*. In April 2024 Julie will be making her debut performance with Opera Magnifico in New Jersey.



# Meet Our Performers

**Rebecca de Almeida** (Charlotte: 1/28, 2/2), Brazilian mezzo-soprano, switched her career as a pianist to an opera singer a couple of years before the pandemic.



Rebecca has performed a variety of roles throughout the US, Latin America and Europe. Her operatic roles include the title role in *Carmen*, the title role in *Giulio Cesare*, Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* and Count Orlovsky in *Die Fledermaus*. Rebecca made her debut at Carnegie Hall (in concert) and her debut in Mexico as Donna Elvira in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*; she was invited back this year to Mexico to sing Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Rebecca is proud to be a recurring soloist for the New Haven Chorale, where this past season she performed in Bach's Magnificat in D and Handel's Messiah for their Holiday Concert. Rebecca is glad to have been welcomed to the professional choir CONCORRA, and to debut this role for Modern Vintage Opera. Rebecca has a passion to educate young children in classical music which led her to develop online programs for children 0 to 7. IG: @rebecca.de.almeida, @musicacomabecca; websites: [www.rebeccadealmeida.com](http://www.rebeccadealmeida.com), [www.musicbecca.com](http://www.musicbecca.com); Facebook: Rebecca de Almeida.

**Chelsea Lorraine** (Sophie), soprano, grew up in southeastern CT. Recent performances include Annina in *La Traviata*, Dew Fairy in *Hansel and Gretel* with Opera Theater of CT, and collaborative recitals focused on art songs and chamber music. Recently, she placed first in CT National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) competition advanced division and third in New England Regional NATS advanced division. Chelsea is a soprano with Boston based choir Voices 21C and was a Masterclass Artist with the Art Song Preservation Society of New York in New York City. She holds a BA in music and a Graduate Performer's Certificate in Vocal Performance from the University of Connecticut, where she studied with celebrated mezzo-soprano, Meredith Ziegler. While at UConn, Chelsea performed various roles with UConn Opera Theater and Outreach, such as, Alice in Walter Slaughter's *Alice in Wonderland*, Amalia Balash in *She Loves Me*, and Second Witch in *Dido and Aeneas*. Currently she is a member of the voice faculty at the Hartt Community Division and maintains a private voice studio. She also studies acting at HB Studio in New York City, with renowned acting teacher, Michael Beckett. Additionally, Chelsea holds a BS in mechanical engineering.



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## Meet Our Performers

**Liam Shannon** (Albert), baritone, has been praised by the South Florida Classical Review for his “strong” voice. He has performed roles such as Ping in Giacomo Puccini’s *Turandot*, Elviro in G.F. Händel’s *Serse*, The Minskman in Jonathan Dove’s *Flight*, The Ferryman in Benjamin Britten’s *Curlew River*, Artemidore / Ubalde in Jean Baptiste-Lully’s *Armide*, and Antonio in W.A. Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He has performed as a soloist with Opera Vermont, the New England Repertory Orchestra, the Utah Valley Vocal Arts Academy, Miami Classical Music Festival, Opera Lucca Festival, and the Bennington County Choral Society. Liam recently graduated with his Master of Music in Vocal Arts & Opera from the USC Thornton School of Music where he studied with renowned voice teacher, Lynn Holding



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