

THE GARDEN STATE OPERA

Francesco Santelli, Artistic Director

Dan Yates, Stage Director



25th SEASON

A TRIBUTE TO ITALIAN COMPOSER

GIOVAN BATTISTA PERGOLESI

`STABAT MATER`

`LA SERVA PADRONA`

with English Supertitles and Chamber Orchestra

Friday November 7, 2025 8PM

Saint John Lutheran Church

587 Springfield Avenue, Summit, NJ 07901

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A special thanks to the Saint John Lutheran Church of Summit and to
Pastor Blake Scalett and to Rev. Haydee Colon Hernandez.

GARDEN STATE OPERA

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A TRIBUTE TO ITALIAN COMPOSER GIOANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESÌ (1710 – 1736)



Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, though he lived only 26 years, left an enduring mark on Baroque music. His *Stabat Mater* is celebrated for its purity, emotion, and divine beauty. Pergolesi's comic opera *La Serva Padrona* reshaped European musical theatre and inspired generations. His music bridged the sacred and the human, influencing Mozart and the rise of the Classical style.

STABAT MATER



A 13th Century Christian Hymn to the Virgin Mary
Music by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi

Francesca Federico, Soprano
Juliana Curcio, Mezzo Soprano

LA SERVA PADRONA (The Servant Mistress)



Libretto by **Gennaro Antonio Federico**
Music by **Giovanni Battista Pergolesi**

A one act opera in Italian with English Supertitles

Krista Hastings, Serpina
Allen Adair, Uberto
Jim Folly, Vespone
Dan Yates Stage Director

with Garden State Opera Chamber Orchestra

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Director and Set Designer, Dan Yates

Costumes and Props, Dan Yates

Production Assistant, Denise Krous

Music Director, Francesco Santelli

Production Accompanist, Dave Malyszko

Orchestra Manager, Gregor Kitsis

GARDEN STATE OPERA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Amy Hamilton-Soto	1st Violin
Gregor Kitzis	2nd Violin
Jordan Fusco	Viola
Matt Goeke	Violoncello
Dennis Masuzzo	Double Bass
Dave Malyszko,	Organ, Harpsichord
Francesco Santelli	Conductor

PRODUCTION NOTES

The **Stabat Mater** is a 13th-century Christian hymn to the Virgin Mary that portrays her suffering as mother during the crucifixion of her son Jesus Christ. Its author may be either the Franciscan friar Jacopone da Todi or Pope Innocent. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi composed in 1736 in the final weeks of his life a musical setting of the Stabat Mater sequence which is very famous and performed all the time due to its intensity and beauty. The Pergolesi Stabat Mater Pergolesi's was a highly popular sacred work written shortly before his death in 1736, praised by contemporaries like Jean-Jacques Rousseau for its emotional depth and moving, otherworldly qualities. Composed for two voices, strings, and continuo, the piece's blend of mournful dissonance, unexpected lighter moments, and expressive counterpoint captured both profound sorrow and hopeful exaltation, influencing later composers and remaining a significant work in sacred music history.

La serva padrona (*The Maid Turned Mistress*) is a 1733 intermezzo by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710–1736) to a libretto by Gennaro Federico, after the play by Jacopo Angello Nelli. It is some 40 minutes long, in two parts without overture, and was written as light-hearted staged entertainment between the acts of Pergolesi's serious

opera *Il prigionier superbo*. More specifically each of the two parts, set in the same dressing room, played during an intermission of the three-act opera to amuse people who remained in their seats. Federico's libretto was also set by Giovanni Paisiello, in 1781. *La serva padrona* and the opera seria it punctuates were premiered at the Teatro San Bartolomeo on 6 September 1733, the first performances there after an earthquake the previous year in Naples had closed all theatres. Both were written for the birthday of Holy Roman Empress Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel a few days earlier. *Il prigioniero superbo* was unsuccessful in its day but has been staged in the composer's home town of Jesi several times and recorded there in 1997, 1998 and 2009, being filmed during the latter year. *La serva padrona* was an immediate hit and became its own stand-alone work. Audiences found it appealing for its relatable characters: wily maid versus aging master. More significantly it became a model for the opera buffa genre and a quintessential piece bridging the Baroque and the Classical periods.



Singer Catherine Nelidova as Serpina (1773)

SYNOPSIS

Part 1

Uberto, an elderly bachelor, is angry and impatient with his maidservant, Serpina, because she has not brought him his chocolate today. Serpina has become so arrogant that she thinks she is the mistress of the household. Indeed, when Uberto calls for his hat, wig and coat, Serpina forbids him to leave the house, adding that from then on he will have to obey her orders. Uberto thereupon orders Vespone to find him a woman to marry so that he can rid himself of Serpina.

Part 2

Serpina convinces Vespone to trick Uberto into marrying her. She informs Uberto that she is to marry a military man named Tempesta. She will be leaving his home and apologizes for her behavior. Vespone, disguised as Tempesta, arrives and, without saying a word, demands 4,000 crowns for a dowry. Uberto refuses to pay such a sum. Tempesta threatens him to either pay the dowry or marry the girl himself. Uberto agrees to marry Serpina. Serpina and Vespone reveal their trick; but Uberto realizes that he has loved the girl all along. They will marry after all; and Serpina will now be the true mistress of the household.

THE ARTISTS



Francesca Federico hailed as having a voice of “such strong presence and beauty of tone that she left one longing for more.” (Opera News), soprano Francesca Federico was born in Paris and is based in New York. Engagements this season include debuting the title role of Strauss’s *Salome* with Heartbeat Opera; soloist with the New York Session Symphony in Mahler’s *Symphony No.4*, with the Greenwich Choral Society in Beethoven’s *Mass in C*, and with the Westchester Choral Society in Bach’s *BWV 140*. She will release her debut album, *Visions and Ecstasies*. on Odradek Records in Fall 2025, a compendium of classical and folk songs of Ireland, borne from her research as a Fulbright Scholar. Other recent projects include: Nannetta in Verdi’s *Falstaf* with Salt Marsh Opera; Anna di Resburgo (cover) in the modern premiere of Carolina Uccelli’s *Anna di Resburgo* with Teatro Nuovo at Lincoln Center; soloist in John Rutter’s *Requiem* with the New England Symphonic Ensemble, conducted by Maestro Rutter at Carnegie Hall; Eurydice in Offenbach’s *Orpheus in the Underworld* with Opera Ithaca and Raylynmor Opera, and soloist with the American Contemporary Music Ensemble at The Morgan Library, performing Ravel’s *Chansons Madécasses* and the premiere of Clarice Jensen’s *Enheduanna*.



Juliana Curcio is thrilled to be performing her first *Stabat Mater* with Garden State Opera. This summer she sang with the Clarence Symphony Orchestra

for their summer concert series. Her most recent US credits includes the title role in *La Tragedie de Carmen* (New Camerata Opera). Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Buffalo Opera Unlimited), the Mother in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Opera in Williamsburg) and the title role in *Carmen* (The Lighthouse Opera). Juliana has sang extensively in Germany, at Theater Aachen singing Dorotea in *Stiffelio*, *Filosofia* in Cesti's *L'Oronte* and Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Zita in *Gianni Schicci* (Mainfranken Theater in Würzburg) and Kate Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* (Eutinfestpiel). Her other credits include: Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* (Anchorage Opera). Alto Soloist in Handel's *Messiah* (Pacific Symphony). La Suora Zelatrice in *Suor Angelica* (St Petersburg Opera). 3rd Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* (Brott Opera). Juliana is also the co-founder of Manhattan Artists Crossing (MAX Studios) a recording studio in Upper Manhattan. She resides in New York City with her husband, Max van Wyck and their dog, Nadia.



Krista Hastings (Serpina) is a young full lyric operatic soprano. Krista possesses a uniquely rich and vibrant tone. Last spring she was selected to as Opera America's young artist for their Career Blueprints workshop. She was an emerging artist with the Janiec Opera Company at the Brevard Music Festival in 2023. There she covered Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata*, and covered the soprano solo in Verdi's *Requiem*, and performed the Stepmother in Sondheim's *Into the Woods*. She performed the title role of *Suor Angelica* from Puccini's *Suor Angelica* with Westminster Opera Theatre as a returning guest alumni. She has performed in Europe and the United States in *La Traviata*, *Suor Angelica*, *Little Women*, *Die Zauberflöte*, and *Cendrillon*. At Westminster Choir College she premiered the title role in *Marie Begins* by Ellen Fishman in its world premiere. She sang *Fiordiligi* in Westminster Opera Theatre's production of *Così fan tutte* by Mozart. Ms. Hastings was awarded the NJ NATS Mildred May Scholarship for 2024-25, she won first place runner-up in the Eastern National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Artist Awards competition, first in the Eastern Regional NATS, New York NATS, and New Jersey NATS competitions. She won the Encouragement Award at the Philadelphia Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition (formerly MET Council Auditions). Krista won the Nebraska District in the Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition, and was a winner of the John Alexander National Vocal Competition. She also was the U.S. winner of

the International Mozart Competition. She earned her Masters of Music in voice performance and pedagogy from Rider University (formerly Westminster Choir College). Learn more at kristahastings.com.



Allen Adair (Uberto) is a bass-baritone, tuba player, and piano technician who was born and raised in Colorado. He holds music degrees in Vocal Performance from the University of Northern Colorado and Carnegie Mellon University. Mr. Adair has been working as a freelance vocalist across the country and has performed with ensembles such as Inland Northwest Opera (Spokane, WA), Roswell Symphony (NM), Opera Colorado, and many more. Recent performances of his include performing as the Huntsman in *Rusalka* with New Jersey Opera Theatre, Quinault in *Adriana Lecouvreur* with Pittsburgh Festival Opera, and singing the role of Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette* at the Quisisana Resort (ME). Mr. Adair currently resides in Philadelphia working as a piano technician and freelance vocalist. Upcoming engagements of his include singing the role of Henry in *The Gift of the Magi* with Delaware Valley Opera Company, performing the role of Le roi in *Cendrillon* with Art City Opera, and being a young artist with Opera on the James in the spring of 2026.



Jim Folly (Vespone) - Jim is very happy to be working with the GSO, he worked with GSO on *The Impresario*. Jim is a graduate of Middlesex County College, where he appeared in *Equus*, *Working*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Scapino*. Jim worked for The Forum Theater in Metuchen in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Olympus On My Mind*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *Enter Laughing*, for Plays in the Park in *Crazy for You* and *Ragtime* and with the Yates Musical Theatre, and Theater to Go, a local Murder Mystery company. Thank you, Garden State Opera company for letting me be part of this production.



Dan Yates, stage director, is pleased to be working with Francesco Santelli and The Garden State Opera again. Previously Dan directed *The Silk City*,

Francesca Da Rimini, Il Tabarro, La Serva Padrona, Bastien und Bastienne, Suor Angelica, L'Oca Del Cairo, Cavaliera Rusticana and Francesco Santelli's original opera's Il Consulente Matrimoniale and Il Negozio Di Campagna for GSO. Dan directs for the Opera/Music Theatre Workshop at Caldwell University, performs professionally as an actor and singer, is the Artistic director of the Yates Musical Theatre for Children and teaches Speech and Theatre courses at Kean University and Montclair State University. He lives in West Orange with his wife Deirdre and children Alexandra and Emily.



Francesco Santelli, Conductor and Composer native of Rome, Italy, is the founder and artistic director of the Garden State Opera. Mr. Santelli has been music director of the Henry Street Opera in New York City, guest conductor of the Brooklyn Opera Theatre and the Connecticut Opera Theatre, the Henry Street Symphony, the Vivaldi Coro Lirico, Intercity Performing Arts, music director of the International Symphony and the New York City Symphony, Camerata, Orchestra, Coro Lirico, Intercity Performing Arts. As a composer/librettist Mr. Santelli has written, among other works, the operas: *Un Destino Immortale*, (on the voyage of Christopher Columbus to the New World), *Mississippi*, *Il Poverello* (on the life of Saint Francis of Assisi), *The Marriage Counselor*, *An Angel in the Park*, the comic opera *Il Negozio di Campagna* and *Tamar da Timna*. In Assisi he performed his *Assisi Concerto* for organ and orchestra, and *Il Poverello* in 2002 and 2003. Mr. Santelli has conducted a production of Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto* in 2015 at the Altamura Center for the Arts upstate New York and the *Assisi Concerto* for organ and orchestra has received the US premiere in New York City in the spring of 2019. His latest opera *The Silk City* on the Silk Strike of Paterson in 1913 has received two performances in 2019 and 2022.