

New England Conservatory
Opera Studies Department
presents

Flight

Opera in 3 Acts. Version for 19 to 30 Players

Composed by Jonathan Dove
Libretto by April de Angelis

Presented under license from Edition Peters., copyright owners.

Conductor	Robert Tweten
Stage Director	Joshua Major
Scenic Designer	Cristina Todesco
Lighting Designer	Chris Hudacs
Costume Designer	Gail Buckley
Musical Preparation	Joel Ayau
	Ji Yung Lee
Rehearsal Pianist	Rafe Lei Schaberg

Thursday–Saturday, November 20–22, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 23, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre

There will be 15' intermissions after Act I and after Act II.

CAST

Thursday, Saturday

Ricky L. Owens. Jr.
Sohyun Cho
Shijin Sun
Autumn Kaeul Ahn
Brianna Davies
Lila Yan
Isaac Hall

REFUGEE
CONTROLLER
BILL
TINA
OLDER WOMAN
STEWARDESS
STEWARD

Jiasen Zhao
Sara Zerilli
Piye Qin

MINSKMAN
MINSKWOMAN
IMMIGRATION OFFICER

Friday, Sunday

Baian Chen
Sua Lee
Suowei Wu
Isabel Merat
Spencer Bailen
Shanshan Xie
Nicholas Ottersberg
Enriquez
Taewan Sohn
Mirah Johnston
Yuhao Zhang

NEC Philharmonia

Robert Tweten, conductor

<i>Violin 1</i>	Lingyu Dong, Eleanor Markey
<i>Violin 2</i>	Yen-Hsiang Darwin Chang, Isabella Sun
<i>Viola</i>	Adam Newman, Yu-Heng Wang
<i>Cello</i>	Alexander Davis-Pegis, Grace Kim
<i>Bass</i>	Avery Cardoza
<i>Flute</i>	Sara Wen
<i>Oboe</i>	Timothy Zhang
<i>Clarinet</i>	Robert Ray
<i>Bassoon</i>	Andrew Salaru
<i>French horn</i>	Hsuan Chiu, Huimin Mandy Liu
<i>Trumpet</i>	Kayla Adams, Rui Wang
<i>Bass Trombone</i>	Charles Johnson
<i>Timpani</i>	Raina Liao
<i>Percussion</i>	Robert Lenau, Michael Avenessian
<i>Harp</i>	Jingtong Zhang
<i>Piano</i>	Rafe Lei Schaberg

SYNOPSIS

The action takes place in an airport, in the present day

ACT I

It is dawn. The Controller sits in her tower. She is content: the airport is empty — except for the Refugee: he has nowhere else to go. People start to arrive, people for the Refugee to befriend. A married couple, Bill and Tina, are going on holiday in an attempt to rediscover romance. The Older Woman is meeting a young man whom she met in Mallorca, her fiancé; she would dearly like to remain inconspicuous but The Steward and Stewardess go brightly about their business — some of the time. Another married couple arrive, almost late for their flight to Minsk: they are emigrating. The Minskwoman is heavily pregnant. At the last moment she refuses to board the plane, and her husband leaves without her. She is left stranded, mortified. The Refugee offers her a magic stone to comfort her.

The Immigration Officer passes through the concourse: he is always a danger to the — illegal — Refugee. The latter, warned by the Controller, manages to avoid notice, this time. The travellers are preparing to depart when the Controller announces that, because of electrical storms, all flights are indefinitely delayed.

ACT II

Night has fallen and still the storm is raging. Worries beset those who are waiting. The storm has even upset the Controller's equilibrium — she leaves her tower and wanders outside in the rain. Everyone in the concourse tries fitfully to sleep, but, in pairs or alone, they secretly approach the Refugee, fascinated by his magic stone. He gives them all what they believe to be the unique stone, and they make wishes. Bill is still restless and seeks out the Stewardess. He makes a mistake and finds the Steward instead: they go off to explore the control tower. The women and the Refugee decide to get drunk, and, as they become more garrulous, the women discover that each of them has 'the' stone. They vent their anger, with dire consequences for the Refugee. The consequences of Bill and the Steward's explorations are less dire but no less cataclysmic.

ACT III

Dawn breaks and the storm has passed. Flights are being resumed. But there are many surprises in store. The Minskman returns: he could not bear to be separated from his wife. Bill and the Steward have a surprise for their partners. Tina has a very nasty surprise for Bill. The Refugee has a surprise for the women. The Minskwoman has a surprise for everyone. The Immigration Officer returns to discover the Refugee, but when the Refugee tells his story, even the Officer has a surprising reaction. Flights are called; people leave; under the Controller's watchful eye, the airport will return to normal ... perhaps.

– Edition Peters

CREATIVE TEAM (in alphabetical order)

JOSHUA MAJOR, Department Chair & Stage Director

Toronto-born Joshua Major began his opera stage directing career at the age of 23 with *La Cenerentola* for Opera Omaha. Soon after, Mr. Major worked as an assistant at the Welsh National Opera, to Rhoda Levine at Juilliard, and to Cynthia Auerbach at both Chautauqua Opera and the New York City Opera. Mr. Major has worked as a stage director for nearly 40 years throughout the United States and Canada developing an impressive and diverse repertoire of productions. Recent productions include *Later the Same Evening* (Musto/Campbell), *Norma* (Bellini), *La Damnation de Faust* (Berlioz), *L'arbore di Diana* (Soler), *La traviata* (Verdi), *Falstaff* (Verdi), *Die Fledermaus* (Strauss), *Don Giovanni* (Mozart), *Romeo and Juliet* (Gounod), *La bohème* (Leoncavallo), and *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Janáček). Mr. Major has worked for numerous companies including, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Wolf Trap Opera, Central City Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Cape Town Opera, Berkshire Opera Festival, Opera Omaha and Odyssey Opera. In August 2012 Mr. Major began as Chair of Opera Studies at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston after completing 20 years on the faculty of the University of Michigan where he oversaw the Opera Program, both teaching and directing. From 2003-2014 Joshua Major was the Artistic Director of the Pine Mountain Music Festival, located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan on the shores of Lake Superior where he produced over 300 concerts of opera, symphony and chamber music. He continues to be a stage director and faculty member with the International Vocal Arts Institute, where he has directed annually since 1993. An advocate for new work, Mr. Major has workshopped operas in progress including works by composers Mark Adamo, Paola Prestini, Scott Wheeler, Julian Wachner and Bright Sheng.

ROBERT TWETEN, Conductor

Robert Tweten has performed extensively as both a pianist and conductor throughout the USA and his native Canada. He currently holds the positions of Head of Music Staff for The Santa Fe Opera and Music Director of Graduate Opera Studies for the New England Conservatory, where he provides musical guidance for the Graduate Opera Studies Program. The position, Head of Music Staff, was created by The Santa Fe Opera for Robert in 2000. He has been on the podium for a number of productions during his tenure at Santa Fe, most recently conducting performances of *Falstaff* during the 2022 season. Tweten has enjoyed a long relationship with Utah Opera/Symphony where he has conducted nineteen productions since his debut in 2005; other companies he has collaborated with include the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Calgary Opera, Vancouver Opera, Florentine Opera, Opera San Antonio, Kentucky Opera, Edmonton Opera, Dayton Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Tulsa Opera and Sarasota Opera. Equally at home as a pianist, Robert has performed throughout the world with many of the industry's most prominent singers, and presently he is Music Director for both Santa Fe's Festival of Song, where he curates and performs recitals with artists from The Santa Fe Opera's summer roster, and the Sag Harbor Song

Festival. Tweten's recent projects have included orchestral concerts with the Santa Fe Pro Musica Orchestra, as well as leading *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* and *Sweeney Todd* for Utah Opera, *Rigoletto* for Pacific Opera Victoria, and the North American premiere of Roberto Scarcella Perino's *Furiosus* at Merkin Hall in New York. Productions this season include *Flight*, *L'elisir d'amore*, and *Le nozze di Figaro* at NEC, a return to USUO to lead *La traviata*, and performances of *Eugene Onegin* with The Santa Fe Opera.

CRISTINA TODESCO, Scenic Designer

Cristina Todesco returns to New England Conservatory where she has designed *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *Die Fledermaus*, *L'arbore di Diana*, *Postcards from Morocco*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Suor Angelica/Gianni Schicchi*, and *Later the Same Evening*. Recent work includes *Mother Ocean: Whaling Women* and *Riders to the Sea*, *L'Etoile*, *Albert Herring* (Boston Conservatory at Berklee); *Oh God* (Landestheater Linz, Austria); *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* (Lyric Stage Company of Boston); *Mr. Parent* (Cincinnati Playhouse); *The Islanders* (Shakespeare and Company). Cristina has also worked with Actors Shakespeare Project, Boston Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall and at Tanglewood, Capital Rep, Central Square Theater, Company One, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Huntington Theatre, Merrimack Rep, Olney Theater Center, Speakeasy Stage, Trinity Rep, and Williamstown Theater Festival, among many more. She is the recipient of four Elliot Norton Awards and an IRNE for Outstanding Design, teaches at Boston University, and is a proud member of Local USA 829.

CHRIS HUDACS, Lighting Designer

Chris returns to NEC, having previously designed on *Cendrillon*, *The Magic Flute*, *Later the Same Evening*, *Suor Angelica/Gianni Schicchi*, and *The Turn of the Screw*. He has also designed lights for Boston Lyric Opera, Pilobolus Dance Theater, The Lyric Stage Company of Boston, The ART/MXAT Institute, Sylvain Emar's "Le Grand Continental" (Celebrity Series of Boston), Tiffany Mills Company (NYC), Raphael Xavier's "The Musician and The Mover", The York Theatre (NYC), Nancy Meehan Dance (NYC), Rites & Reason Theatre (Brown University) and many others. He is currently collaborating with the Los Angeles based Versa-Style Street Dance Company on an evening length hip-hop dance performance honoring the evolution of Breaking from the 1970s through today, slated to premiere in March 2026. In addition, he has toured as a Production Manager/Technical Director with Pilobolus, Shen Wei Dance Arts, David Dorfman Dance, Doug Varone and Dancers, and Stephen Petronio Dance Company. Images of his work can be found at: www.WhodaxLD.com

GAIL BUCKLEY, Costume Designer

Gail Astrid Buckley has worked as a costume designer in television, film, opera, and theater within the New England area and designed for many venues, including The Huntington Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Boston Lyric Opera, The Hanover Theatre, Lyric Stage Company, Speakeasy Stage Company, Underground Railroad

Theatre, The Nora Theatre Company, The Hasty Pudding Theatricals, Gloucester Stage Company, and The Greater Boston Stage Company. Her designs have won multiple awards for best design. Her work includes historical periods from medieval to modern. Favorite designs include the operas *Merry Widow* and *Marriage of Figaro* to plays/musicals *Murder on the Orient Express* and *My Fair Lady*. Other work includes designing costumes for the Hasty Pudding's *Saloon Tunes* opening February 2026. She is a longtime member of the design union United Scenic Artist Local 829 and is proud to serve on the executive board. Gail has a BFA in Costume Design from Boston University.

JOEL AYAU, Musical Preparation

Senior Vocal Coach Joel Ayau is a graduate of the Cafritz Young Artist Program of Washington National Opera and has also worked on the music staffs of North Carolina Opera, Portland Opera, Opera Omaha, Wolf Trap Opera, and Aspen Opera Theatre and VocalARTS. During his three seasons on the music staff of the Castleton Festival, he also prepared the chorus for *Roméo et Juliette* under Rafael Payarre, and Lorin Maazel's productions of *Don Giovanni* and *Madama Butterfly*. Ayau's concert appearances include recitals at Stern Auditorium in Carnegie Hall, the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, and National Concert Hall in Taipei, accompanying partners including Renée Fleming, David Portillo, Kathryn Lewek, and Zach Borichevsky.

Ji YUNG LEE, Musical Preparation

Ji Yung Lee, hailed by *Gramophone* for her "beautiful playing" and "intimate internal dialogues," is a versatile pianist and has made appearances at Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Weill Hall, and John F. Kennedy Center. She is the 2nd prize and special award winner at Salieri-Zinetti International Chamber Music Competition in Italy. Lee is a music staff member at Boston Lyric Opera and recently served as a coach for their world-premiere production, *The Seasons*. She received special recognition in *The Boston Globe* for leading the pit ensemble from the harpsichord on minutes' notice after the music director was unexpectedly unavailable. Other recent highlights include Dame Myra Hess Concert Series; Rockport Chamber Music Festival; Harriman-Jewell Series; a video production for Tonebase with cellist Laurence Lesser; and WQXR's Christmas Concert with tenor Stephen Costello. Lee also has worked with Victory Hall Opera, Boston Arts Song Society, and Juilliard's Drama division. She has participated as a vocal piano fellow in festivals including Music Academy of the West, Aspen Music Festival and School, SongFest, and Hawaii Performing Arts Festival and as a conducting fellow in Pehlivanian Opera Academy. Lee received her master's degree with academic honors from New England Conservatory and a Graduate Diploma from The Juilliard School.

CAST BIOS (in alphabetical order)

AUTUMN KAEUL AHN, Tina

Autumn Kaeul Ahn is a coloratura soprano currently pursuing her Graduate Diploma at NEC under Carole Haber. She completed both her bachelor's and master's degrees at Yonsei University with highest honors and made her professional debut in 2018, in Korea. A member of the government-affiliated ARKO Ensemble, she has recently performed roles including Despina, Valentina, and Rosina.

SPENCER BAILEN, Older Woman

Spencer Bailen is currently a second-year master's student at the New England Conservatory. She completed her Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Miami. Upcoming roles include Dove's *Flight* (Older Woman), and *Le nozze di Figaro* (Marcellina) at NEC. Recent roles include Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Arnalta) and Musto's *Later the Same Evening* (Thelma) at NEC.

BAIAN CHEN, Refugee

Countertenor Baian Chen brings a vibrant presence to both Baroque and contemporary opera. His recent roles include Polinesso (*Ariodante*), Tolomeo (*Giulio Cesare*), the Spirit (*Dido and Aeneas*), Orfeo (*Orfeo ed Euridice*), Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and Bradamante (*Alcina*). Upcoming performances include tonight's Refugee (*Flight*) and Arsamene (*Serse*).

SOHYUN CHO, Controller

Sohyun Cho, soprano from Seoul, South Korea, is pursuing a Graduate Diploma at the New England Conservatory under Bradley Williams. She has performed roles including Poppea (Monteverdi), the Countess (Mozart), and Valentina (Musto). A first-prize winner of the International New York Competition, she previously earned her master's degree at the University of Michigan.

BRIANNA DAVIES, Older Woman

Brianna Davies, mezzo-soprano, is a second-year master's student at New England Conservatory, studying with MaryAnn McCormick. She debuted professionally with Opera Tampa in *Don Giovanni* and *La traviata*, won multiple competitions, and performed internationally. Recent roles include Estelle, Arnalta, and upcoming roles as Older Woman in *Flight* and Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

ISAAC HALL, Steward

Isaac Hall is a baritone studying with Michael Meraw. He is in his second year of the masters program at NEC. Previously, Isaac has performed Guglielmo from *Così fan tutte* and Joe Harland from *Later the Same Evening* with NEC.

MIRAH JOHNSTON, Minskwoman

Mirah Johnston is a lyric mezzo-soprano currently completing her MM in Vocal Performance at NEC in the studio of Carole Haber. Originally from NH, Mirah has been performing in the area for over ten years. She looks forward to performing Cherubino in NEC's production of *Le nozze di Figaro* this April and graduating in May.

SUA LEE, Controller

Sua Lee is a coloratura soprano currently in her second year of the Master's program in Vocal Performance at the New England Conservatory. She has performed in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, and *Rigoletto*.

ISABEL MERAT, Tina

Lyric-coloratura soprano Isabel Merat, originally from Queens, NY, is pursuing a Master of Music degree at New England Conservatory, where she studies voice and opera. A graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, she has performed in NEC Opera productions, Liederabend concerts, masterclasses, and has upcoming performances in opera, art song, and concert works.

NICHOLAS OTTERSBERG ENRIQUEZ, Steward

Nicholas Ottersberg Enriquez is a baritone originally from Santa Fe, NM. He graduated from NEC in '24 with a B.M. in Vocal Performance and is currently working towards earning his M.M. Some recent professional engagements include performing as a soloist with the Nightingale Ensemble, Commonwealth Chorale, Masterworks Chorale, and singing in the chorus for Odyssey Opera.

RICKY L. OWENS, JR., Refugee

Ricky Lee Owens, Jr., countertenor from Dallas, TX, holds a B.A. in Music from Prairie View A&M University and an M.M. in Vocal Performance–Opera from Carnegie Mellon University. Currently pursuing a Graduate Diploma at New England Conservatory, he brings powerful storytelling to both Baroque and contemporary opera, winning numerous vocal competitions nationwide.

PIYE QIN, Immigration Officer

Piye Qin is a bass-baritone from China. He earned his bachelor's degree from the Xi'an Conservatory of Music and is currently a second-year graduate student at the New England Conservatory of Music. He participated in the 2025 Chicago Summer Opera.

TAEWON SOHN, Minskman

Baritone Taewon Sohn earned his Master of Music degree in Voice with a full scholarship from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. In 2023–24, he made his professional debut as Bonzo in *Madama Butterfly* with the Virginia Opera Herndon Foundation Emerging Artist Program. He currently studies with Professor Bradley

Williams at NEC.

SHIJIN SUN, Bill

Sun Shijin is a Chinese tenor and a first-year master's student at the New England Conservatory. An alumnus of the Wuhan Conservatory of Music, he has collaborated with its Oriental Symphony Orchestra and was a young artist at Italy's Novara Opera Theatre.

SUOWEI WU, Bill

Suowei Wu is a tenor from Wenzhou, China. He appeared in the role of Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) and he has also performed Alfredo (*Die Fledermaus*), Jimmy (*Later the Same Evening*) and Lucano (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) at NEC. In the summer of 2025, Suowei went to Tanglewood Music Center as a vocal fellow.

SHANSHAN XIE, Stewardess

Shanshan Xie is a mezzo-soprano currently studying with Bradley Williams at the New England Conservatory in Boston. She previously studied at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris. At NEC, she recently performed the title role of Hansel in the opera *Hansel and Gretel*.

LILA YAN, Stewardess

Lila Yan is a Chinese mezzo-soprano and a first-year graduate student at the New England Conservatory. She graduated from the Xinghai Conservatory of Music and has worked with orchestras such as the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra and the Macao Symphony Orchestra.

SARA ZERILLI, Minskwoman

Sara Zerilli is a second year master's student at New England Conservatory. Role experience with NEC includes *Flight* (Minskwoman), *Così fan tutte* (Dorabella) and Musto's *Later the Same Evening* (Estelle). Sara is looking forward to her upcoming roles in *Gianni Schicchi* (Zita), and *Le nozze di Figaro* (Marcellina).

YUHAO ZHANG, Immigration Officer

Bass-Baritone Yuhao Zhang is currently enrolled in the master's program at New England Conservatory. This past summer, he performed Melisso in Handel's *Alcina* with Chicago Summer Opera, and he has also performed multiple opera scenes in collaboration with Classic Lyric Arts. He has studied with Bradley Williams and Ricardo Lugo.

JIASEN ZHAO, Minskman

Jiasen Zhao is a baritone and master's student at New England Conservatory of Music for the Fall 2024 semester, studying under Bradley Williams. In 2019, he enrolled in the Vocal Music and Opera Department of Shanghai Conservatory of Music for undergraduate degree, specializing in Voice performance and graduated in

2024. During his undergraduate studies, he participated in performances such as *La traviata* and Liederabend XV—the 15th Art Song Night, and studied under Huang Xuan.

NEC OPERA STUDIES

Chair of Opera Studies	Joshua Major
Music Director	Robert Tweten
Acting Instructor	Steven Goldstein
Stage Movement Instructor	DeAnna Pellecchia
Stage Combat	Sarah Flanagan
Administrative and Production Director for Opera & Voice	Úna Rafferty
Vocal Coaching & Musical Preparation	Joel Ayau, Brett Hodgdon, Ji Yung Lee, JJ Penna, Timothy Steele

TECHNICAL TEAM

Technical Director	Miguel Ferreira
Stage Manager	Liz Diamond
Assistant Stage Manager	Zachary Sayre
Master Electrician	Molly Beall
Light Board Operator	Em Currier-Dougherty
Wig Designer	Rachel Padula-Shufelt
Wig and Hair Artist	Kat Shanahan
Makeup Artist	Jade Gordon
Wardrobe Supervisor	Ellie DeLucia
Surtitles Operator	Aida Skaraite
Show Caller	Tomer Rozen
Audio Engineer	Collin Register
Video Engineer	Nicholas Federico
Carpenters	Redacted Maxwell, Alexia Rowe PJ Hernandez, Isaac West, Opal Teitler
Electricians	Matt Breton, James Hoàng, Em Currier-Dougherty, Gabriel Karr

NEC VOICE FACULTY

Jane Eaglen	Ricardo L. Lugo Garay
Carole Haber	MaryAnn McCormick
Michael Meraw	Bradley Williams—Chair

NEC ORCHESTRA DEPARTMENT

Stanford and Norma Jean Calderwood

Director of Orchestras

Director of Large Ensemble Admin.

Associate Director of Orchestras

Artistic Director of Chamber Orchestra

Head of Orchestral Conducting

Performance Librarian

Student Librarian

Hugh Wolff

Marjorie Apfelbaum

David Loebel

Donald Palma

Stefan Asbury

Andrés Almirall

Graham Lin

Special thanks to

Wooden Kiwi - Scenic Supplier

Port Lighting Systems - Lighting Supplier

Rachel Padula Shufelt - Wig Supplier

Upcoming Opera Performance—Fall, 2025

NEC Opera: Handel Scenes and Shakespeare Monologues

Wednesday, December 3 & Thursday, December 4 at 6:00 p.m.

Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre

Support the future of music at NEC!

Your gift can unleash the power of music by expanding scholarships, fostering innovation, and bringing music's impact and transformative reach to all.

Make a gift today at necmusic.edu/givenow

Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall,
and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.
Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.
Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

Stay connected



necmusic.edu/tonight