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+

PUCCINI'S
GIANNI SCHICCHI

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DEAR FRIENDS:

Welcome to Bella Collina! Who knew that Tuscany was just a 30-minute drive from Orlando? We fell in love with Bella Collina about three years ago when we were invited to do a site visit here by our friends at Montverde Academy. Little did we know that we were visiting one of the premiere wedding venues in Central Florida, nor did we even consider before the visit that we would present an opera here. But, after that fortuitous meeting, we were so totally blown away by the incredible views and spectacular architecture that we just knew we had to present something here. But what?



The first thing we were struck by was that this picturesque location is reminiscent of an Italian estate worthy of the Donati family from Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, but then we needed a one act opera to pair with Puccini's comedic masterpiece that would also fit this beautiful site. That proved to be a bit tricky, but after discarding dramas and tragedies as an option, and realizing Gilbert & Sullivan and Offenbach wouldn't quite fit the Italianate atmosphere, we finally found the perfect one act that could serve as a prequel to *Gianni Schicchi* and explain how poor Buoso Donati meets his demise. The perfect fit is Rossini's *La cambiale di matrimonio* or *The Marriage Contract* which only required a few small modifications to—hopefully seamlessly—tie it together with *Gianni Schicchi*. Our creative team went to work on a new English translation of *The Marriage Contract* and made some small updates to *Gianni Schicchi* to shift the plot to Bella Collina, Florida as opposed to Bella Collina, Italy. Although, if you get a little geographically lost and feel like you really are in Tuscany tonight, all the better!

We hope you enjoy yourself tonight, and we invite you to be a part of the action. Don't be shy! Just keep an eye out for that Schicchi fellow. I hear he is quite the ham in addition to being a charming baritone. Oh, and I hear there may even be a duel. So, heads up!

See **YOU** at the Opera!

Gabriel Preisser, general director
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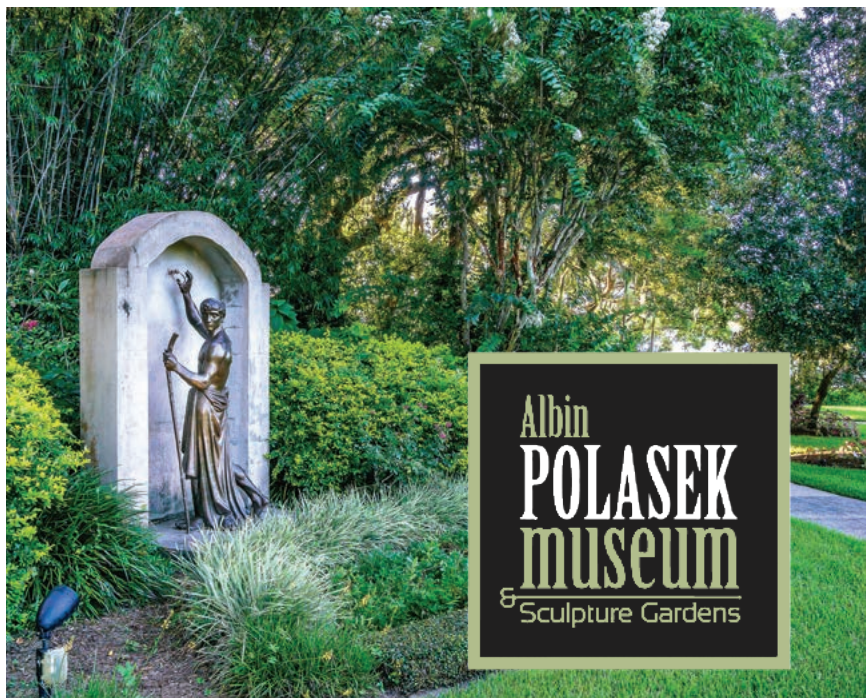
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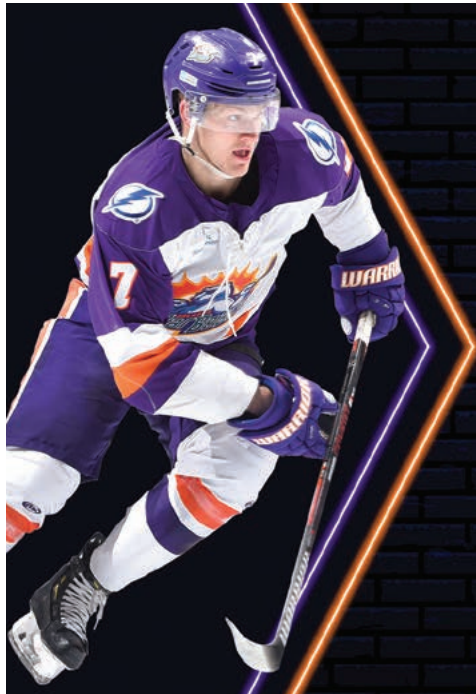
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OPERAORLANDO

THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

music by **Gioachino Rossini** & libretto by **Gaetano Rossi**

in a new English translation by **Gabriel Preisser**

+

GIANNI SCHICCHI

music by **Giacomo Puccini** & libretto by **Giovacchino Forzano**

English translation by **Anne & Hebert Grossman** and **Gabriel Preisser**

sung in English

OPERA ON THE TOWN

Friday | **March 31, 2023** at **7:30 p.m.**



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The Marriage Contract (*La cambiale di matrimonio*)

La cambiale di matrimonio (***The Marriage Contract***) was the first professional opera composed by Gioachino Rossini when he was just eighteen years old, and how he received the commission is actually worth becoming an opera itself. At age fourteen Rossini played cembalo at the opera in Sinigallia. One evening, the company's leading soprano, Adelaide Carpano, launched into a particularly florid bit of improvisation and sang blatantly off key. Rossini laughed out loud at her terrible singing, which outraged the *prima donna* who complained to Marchese Cavalli, the director of the company. He called Rossini into his office to deliver a stern reprimand, but when Rossini explained what happened, hilariously mimicking Carpano's singing, he sent the impresario into fits of laughter. So taken was Cavalli by young Rossini that he promised to aid him in his hopes of composing operas. Four years later, a mutual friend of Cavalli and Rossini's family, maestro Giovanni Morandi, recommended that Cavalli, now heading the Teatro Giustiniani a San Moisè in Venice, turn to Rossini to compose an opera in just a few days to replace one that another composer had failed to write. The result was *La cambiale di matrimonio*, which launched the career of one of opera's greatest composers who went on to compose opera favorites *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Cenerentola*. Though ***The Marriage Contract*** is not performed as often as these masterpieces, the overture, written when Rossini was a student at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna, is often programmed in modern concert repertoire.

Gianni Schicchi

Gianni Schicchi premiered at The Metropolitan Opera on December 14, 1918 and stands as Puccini's only comic opera. The story for the opera is derived from a passage in the 30th canto of Dante's *Inferno*, which mentions, in an unflattering fashion, Gianni Schicchi—who was an actual Florentine—as having been consigned to the eighth circle of hell with other forgers and cheats for disguising himself as Buoso Donati, a recently deceased Florentine aristocrat, in order to obtain Donati's wealth for himself. Part of Donati's great house, so coveted in the opera, still stands in Florence today, a crumbling tower on the Via del Corso, very near to the house where Dante was born in 1265. Dante, in fact, married Gemma Donati—to whom he was formally betrothed at age 12—five years before the death of his beloved muse, Beatrice Portinari. Thus, it is quite possible that he was sympathetic to the Donati side of events.

Puccini and his librettist, Giovacchino Forzano, saw potential for social satire in the story, and for its premiere it was presented as the third part of a trilogy of newly written one-act operas by Puccini billed as *Il trittico* (*The Triptych*)—the first two were *Il tabarro* (*The Cloak*) and *Suor Angelica* (*Sister Angelica*). *Il tabarro* was a dark tragedy and *Suor Angelica* a melodramatic one, so by closing with ***Gianni Schicchi***, Puccini rounded off the night with a high-spirited comic farce. Critical reaction at the time judged that ***Gianni Schicchi*** was “an uproarious delight,” and it was the most favorably received of the three.

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SETTING: 1790s – *Tuscany via Central Florida*

ACT I - THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

Longtime servants to the Donati family, Marco and Ciesca, are discussing a letter they received for Gianni Schicchi, Buoso Donati's right hand man, regarding an impending marriage offer from Billy Bob of Alabama, who is due to visit later that day. Schicchi enters trying to figure out where/what Alabama actually is and orders the household to prepare for Billy Bob's arrival. Schicchi's daughter and Billy Bob's intended, Laretta, enters after everyone leaves with her secret lover, Rinuccio Donati. They are interrupted by the arrival of Billy Bob, and after much fanfare, everyone leaves Billy Bob alone with Laretta. She is quite cold to him and Rinuccio joins them to scare Billy Bob away with the news that Buoso is sick and contagious.

Schicchi returns with Buoso, but Billy Bob, fearing he will catch whatever Buoso has contracted, is ready to head back to Alabama. Schicchi pleads with Billy Bob to stay, but Billy Bob confesses that he doesn't think Laretta is completely committed to the wedding and that she loves someone else. He would rather call it all off. Schicchi assures him Rinuccio is just a passing fancy. He proposes a contract—a marriage contract—to make everything official. They discuss and agree to terms.

With the agreement in place, Schicchi calls Laretta to order her to marry Billy Bob. However, Laretta pleads with her father to let her marry for love. Schicchi relents and tries to get out of the contract, but Billy Bob is adamant that any breach must end in a duel—per the agreement. With the whole Donati family as witnesses, Schicchi chooses Buoso to be his second, and the duel commences with a happy end for the young lovers but (spoiler alert!) tragedy for poor old Buoso.

ACT II - GIANNI SCHICCHI

Buoso Donati dies from his wounds sustained in Schicchi and Billy Bob's duel. His relatives are left to speculate about his will. They are nervous that instead of leaving them the money and estate, he has left all his money instead to the local arts organizations (the horror!). They search for the will, and Rinuccio, who finds it, refuses to hand it over until his Aunt Zita, the self-designated head of household, promises to let him marry Laretta. When the family reads the will and finds their fears to be true, Rinuccio sends for Schicchi telling the family that only he has the ingenuity to fix this situation.

Although they resent Schicchi, when he arrives with Laretta they beg him to help them. Schicchi only agrees when Laretta again appeals to him, as her happiness with Rinuccio depends on it. Since no one outside the family knows that Buoso is dead, Schicchi decides to disguise himself as Buoso, summon a lawyer, and dictate a new will. The relatives all have particular things that they want from Buoso, and Schicchi leaves each one as requested. But to their surprise, he reserves for himself the prize item of the estate, finally rising to the status of independence and wealth he so desperately craves.



THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION BETWEEN ACTS
PERFORMANCE RUN TIME: 2 hours and 20 minutes

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WORTH A WATCH

Gianni Schicchi

Sony Pictures Classics



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*Bella Notte
@
Bella Collina*

ROSSINI'S
THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT
+
PUCCINI'S
GIANNI SCHICCHI



CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

MARCO Stephen Mumbert
CIESCA Raphaella Medina
GIANNI SCHICCHI Gabriel Preisser
LAURETTA Sara Lucille Law
RINUCCIO Robert Hartfield
BILLY BOB / AMANTIO Geoffrey Peterson
BUOSO DONATI Larry Kellogg
ZITA Robyn Rocklein
NELLA Samantha Barnes-Daniel
GHERARDO John Teixeira
GHERARDINO Cooper Labelle
BETTO Lee Furman Mueller
SIMONE Jacob Pence

ORCHESTRA

Kyle Naig piano
Charles Glazer violin II
Linda Kessler viola
Jean-Marie Glazer cello
César Olmeda bass

PRODUCTION TEAM

Kyle Naig music director
Grant Preisser stage director
Tiffany Lyn Meadows-Green stage manager
Howard Vincent Kurtz costume designer
Destinee Steele hair & makeup designer
Emily DeNardo company manager
Tyler Bargfrede technical director & shop foreman
Cait Durrance costume shop manager & wardrobe supervisor



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THE ARTISTS



STEPHEN MUMBERT | MARCO
HOMETOWN: Altamonte Springs, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Hugo, *All is Calm*, 2022
Count Monterone, *Rigoletto*, 2022
Doctor, *Death of Ivan Ilych*, 2021

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Jesus, *St. Matthew Passion* (Bach Festival Society of Winter Park)
Bass Soloist, Handel's *Messiah* (Messiah Choral Society)

sponsored by *Mary & Frank Doherty*



RAPHAELLA MEDINA | CIESCA
HOMETOWN: Tallahassee, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Third Lady, *The Magic Flute*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Elder 2 / Elderly Woman, *Sky on Swings* (Opera Saratoga)
Rosina (cover), *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera)
Diana, *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* (Opera Santa Barbara)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Zinida, *He Who Gets Slapped* (UCF Symphony Orchestra)
Soloist, *Baseball: a Musical Love Letter* (Opera Orlando)

sponsored by *Diane & Blair Murphy*



GABRIEL PREISSER | GIANNI SCHICCHI
HOMETOWN: Apopka, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Belfiore, *King for a Day*, 2022
Eisenstein, *Die Fledermaus*, 2020
Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro*, 2019

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Danillo, *The Merry Window* (Opera Idaho)
Farmer Bean, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Opera San Antonio)
Lt. Gordon, *Silent Night* (Detroit Opera)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Sweeney Todd, *Sweeney Todd* (Helena Symphony)
Soloist, *Baseball: A Musical Love Letter* (Opera Orlando)
Figaro, *il barbiere di Siviglia* (Teatro San Carlo)

sponsored by *Jane & Charlie Gibbons*



SARA LUCILLE LAW | LAURETTA
HOMETOWN: Long Island City, NY

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Papagena & Queen of the Night (cover),
The Magic Flute, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Amalia Balash, *She Loves Me* (Utah Festival Opera & Quisisana Resort)
Frasquita, *Carmen* (Utah Festival Opera & Musical Theatre)
Papagena, *The Magic Flute* (Utah Festival Opera & Musical Theatre)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Guenevere, *Camelot* (Ohio Light Opera)
Josephine, *H.M.S. Pinafore* (Ohio Light Opera)
Cupid, *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Ohio Light Opera)

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ROBERT HARTFIELD | RINUCCIO
HOMETOWN: Vichy, MO

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Tamino (cover) / Priest / Armored Man,
The Magic Flute, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS
Lorenzo, *The Pirate's Daughter* (Romania Lyric)
Fernando, *Così fan tutti* (Finger Lakes Opera)
Monostatos, *Die Zauberflöte* (Pensacola Opera)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS
Tenor Soloist, Mozart *Requiem* (Treasure Coast Singers)
Mancini, *He Who Gets Slapped* (UCF Symphony Orchestra)
Tornio (cover), *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Opera Orlando)

sponsored by Steven P. Clawson



GEOFFREY PETERSON | BILLY BOB / AMANTIO
HOMETOWN: Trumansburg, NY

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
William, *All is Calm*, 2022
Marullo, *Rigoletto*, 2022
Augustus, *The Secret River*, 2021

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS
The Scholar, *I CAN'T BREATHE* (Pacific Opera Project)
Bob (cover), *Highway 1 U.S.A* (Opera Theater of St. Louis)
Pastor / Promotor / Walter White, *Marian's Song* (Houston Grand Opera)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS
Hortensius, *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Opera Orlando)

sponsored by Leila Trismen



ROBYN ROCKLEIN | ZITA
HOMETOWN: Sarasota, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Witch, *Hansel and Gretel*, 2021

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS
Santuzza, *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Sarasota Festival of Vocal Arts)
Elizabeth Proctor, *The Crucible* (Arizona Opera Theater)
Second Lady, *The Magic Flute* (St. Petersburg Opera)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS
Soloist, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* (Tampa Oratorio Singers & Orchestra)
Soloist, Mendelssohn's *Hear My Prayer* (Covenant Life PCA Choir & Orchestra)
Soloist, Handel's *Messiah* (Presbyterian Church of the Covenant)

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SAMANTHA BARNES DANIEL | NELLA
HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS
Mother, *Hansel & Gretel*, 2018
Clorinda, *Cenerentola*, 2018
Catherine of Aragon, *6 of VIII*, 2019

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS
First Lady, *Die Zauberflöte* (Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra)
Soloist, Mahler's *2nd & 3rd Symphonies* (Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra)
Soprano, *Voices of Liberty*, EPCOT (Walt Disney World)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS
Soprano, *Helios* (Solaria-Orlando Sings)



JOHN TEIXIERA | GHERARDO

HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

Victor, *All is Calm*, 2022
Conte Ivrea, *King for a Day*, 2022
Giuseppe, *La Traviata*, 2021

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Albert Peterson, *Bye Bye Birdie* (Central Florida Community Arts)
The Pirate King, *The Pirates of Penzance* (Central Florida Community Arts)
Che, *Evita* (Osceola Arts)



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HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

Minion, *The Magic Flute*, 2022
Hector, *The Secret River*, 2021
Town's kid, *Carmen*, 2021

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Frantic / Young Fox, *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Stetson Opera Theatre)

Opera Orlando Youth Company Member



LEE FURMAN MUELLER | BETTO

HOMETOWN: The Villages, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

Bass/Baritone Chorus since 2016

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Bass, Opera Co. of Philadelphia, 1984 - 1990
Bill, *Mama Mia* (ProAm Performing Arts)
Captain von Trap, *The Sound of Music* (Smash Productions)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Ensemble, *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Opera Orlando)



JACOB PENCE | SIMONE DONATI

HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

Sid, *The Girl of the Golden West*, 2020
The Client, *Safe Word*, 2018
Dax, *Safe Word*, 2018

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Maestro Spinelloccio, *Gianna Schicci* (Opera Tampa)
Boy Chapel, *No. 5 Chanel* (Timucua Arts Foundation)
Corporal, *La fille du Regiment* (St. Petersburg Opera)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Corporal, *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Opera Orlando)

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THE PRODUCTION TEAM



KYLE NAIG * | music director / pianist
HOMETOWN: San Francisco, CA

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

music director/conductor, *Into the Woods* (Intermountain Opera Bozeman)
conductor, *Ercole su' l Termodonte* (Pacific Opera Project)
pianist/coach, *Flight* (The Dallas Opera)

sponsored by *Audrey & John Ruggieri*



GRANT PREISSER | stage director
HOMETOWN: Chicago, IL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

stage director, *All is Calm*, 2022
stage director, *The Magic Flute*, 2022
stage director, *La Traviata*, 2021

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

stage director, *Death of Ivan Ilych* (Thompson Street Opera Company)
stage director, *Alcina* (University of Michigan)
stage director, *Shining Brow* (UrbanArias)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

scenic designer, *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Opera Orlando)

sponsored by *Frank Santos*



TIFFANY LYN MEADOWS-GREEN |
stage manager

HOMETOWN: Orlando, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

stage manager, *All is Calm*, 2022
stage manager, *The Magic Flute*, 2022
stage manager, *Rigoletto*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

production manager (current) (St. Luke's United Methodist Church)
production manager, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Jr.* (Theatre at St. Luke's)
production stage manager, *Oliver!* (Theatre at St. Luke's)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

stage manager, *The Daughter of the Regiment* (Opera Orlando)
stage manager, *Baseball: a Musical Love Letter* (Opera Orlando)



HOWARD VINCENT KURTZ |
costume designer

HOMETOWN: Maitland, FL

OPERA ORLANDO ENGAGEMENTS

costume designer, *Lizbeth*, 2022
costume designer, *The Mozart Dinner*, 2022
costume construction, *Rigoletto*, 2022

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

costume designer, *True North* (Orlando Repertory Theatre)
costume designer, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*
(Orlando Shakespeare Theater)
costume designer, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Arena Stage)

* Opera Orlando debut



DESTINEE STEELE * |
hair & makeup designer
 HOMETOWN: Sanford, FL

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS

wig & makeup associate, *Death of a Salesman* (Broadway)
 wig & makeup designer, *The Color Purple* (Broadway at Music Circus)
 wig & makeup designer, *Sister Act* (Pittsburgh CLO)

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

wig designer, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* (Orlando Shakespeare Theater)
 wig & hair designer, *Steel Magnolias* (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley)
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* *Opera Orlando debut*

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invitation to board annual meeting	✦	✦	✦	✦						
invitation to exclusive cocktail parties with MainStage artists	✦	✦	✦	✦						
invitation to MainStage dress rehearsals	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦					
backstage tour of the production	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦				
invitation to fall Studio Artist donor party	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦			
lunch/bridge with development director	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦			
invitation to Ambassador receptions	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	✦	
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