

LEON WILSON CLARK  
OPERA SERIES

SHEPHERD SCHOOL OPERA

*and the*

SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

*present*

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

*An opera in two acts by Benjamin Britten*

*Libretto by Myfanwy Piper*

*Debra Dickinson, stage director*

*James Gaffigan, guest conductor*

*Michael Franciosi, musical preparation*

November 9, 11, 13 and 14, 2004

7:30 p.m.

Wortham Opera Theatre

RICE UNIVERSITY

the  
Shepherd  
School  
of Music

## CAST

<i>Prologue</i>	Beau Gibson
<i>The Governess</i>	Angela Mortellaro
<i>The Children's Guardian</i>	Judson Perry
<i>Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper</i>	Stacia Morgan
<i>Flora</i>	Nicole Rodin
<i>Miles</i>	Emily Vacek
<i>Peter Quint, the former manservant</i>	Judson Perry
<i>Miss Jessel, the former governess</i>	Marianna Suri

## COVERS

<i>Prologue</i>	Judson Perry
<i>The Governess</i>	Jennifer Moore
<i>The Children's Guardian</i>	Beau Gibson
<i>Mrs. Grose</i>	Andrea Trusty
<i>Flora</i>	Grace Fields
<i>Miles</i>	Andrea Leyton-Mange
<i>Peter Quint</i>	Beau Gibson
<i>Miss Jessel</i>	Lindsay Boulware

## Members of the SHEPHERD SCHOOL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

*Larry Rachleff, music director*

**Violin I**  
*Cristian Macelaru*

**Violin II**  
*Jason Moody*

**Viola**  
*François Vallières*

**Cello**  
*Ryan Sweeney*

**Double Bass**  
*Edward Botsford*

**Flute, Piccolo  
and Alto Flute**  
*Leslie Richmond*

**Oboe**  
*Jaren Philleo*

**Clarinet and  
Bass Clarinet**  
*Louis DeMartino*

**Bassoon**  
*Ellen Connors*

**Horn**  
*Jonas VanDyke*

**Percussion**  
*Grant Gould*

**Harp**  
*Mollie McDermott*

**Piano and Celesta**  
*Charles Tauber*

**Orchestra Manager**  
*Martin Merritt*

**Orchestra Librarian  
and Assistant  
Personnel Manager**  
*Kaaren Fleisher*

**Assistant Stage  
Manager**  
*Joshua Beck*

## PRODUCTION STAFF

<i>Stage Director</i>	Debra Dickinson
<i>Conductor</i>	James Gaffigan
<i>Musical Preparation</i>	Michael Franciosi
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Freddy Reymundo
<i>Set and Furniture Designer</i>	Kirk Markley
<i>Lighting Designer, Technical Director</i>	Graf Imhoof
<i>Dialect Coach</i>	Joan Allouache
<i>Stage Manager, Properties Master</i>	Alex Stutler
<i>Hair and Makeup</i>	Freddy Reymundo
<i>Rehearsal Pianists</i>	Michael Franciosi, Charles Tauber
<i>Surtitles</i>	Debra Dickinson
<i>Surtitle Operators</i>	Hannah Nelson, Max Wier IV
<i>Followspot Operators</i>	Alexandra Boulé-Buckley Amanda Conley, Kelly Duerr
<i>Running Crew</i>	Beau Gibson, Raines Taylor, Carlos Vicente Colm Estridge, Hannah Nelson Audrey Walstrom, Malody Johnson



# THE TURN OF THE SCREW

*Music by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)*

*Libretto by Myfanwy Piper*

*after the novella by Henry James.*

*The action takes place at Bly, a country estate in England.*

*The time is the last half of the nineteenth century.*

## PROLOGUE

### ACT I

*Scene 1: The Journey. A coach on the road to Bly.*

*Scene 2: The Welcome. The porch of Bly, a country estate.  
Immediately following.*

*Scene 3: The Letter. The hall at Bly. A few weeks later.*

*Scene 4: The Tower. On the grounds of Bly. Late afternoon  
a few weeks later.*

*Scene 5: The Window. The hall at Bly. A few days later.*

*Scene 6: The Lesson. The children's schoolroom.  
A few days later.*

*Scene 7: The Lake. Near Bly. A few days later.*

*Scene 8: At Night. On the grounds of Bly. That night.*

## INTERMISSION

*(15 minutes)*

### ACT II

*Scene 1: Colloquy and Soliloquy. Nowhere.*

*Scene 2: The Bells. A churchyard cemetery near Bly.  
A Sunday morning.*

*Scene 3: Miss Jessel. The children's schoolroom.  
Immediately following.*

*Scene 4: The Bedroom. Miles' bedroom. That evening.*

*Scene 5: Quint. Miles' bedroom and the children's schoolroom.  
Immediately following.*

*Scene 6: The Piano. The parlour at Bly. The next evening.*

*Scene 7: Flora. The lake near Bly. Immediately following.*

*Scene 8: Miles. The porch of Bly. The next morning.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Special thanks to IATSE Local 51,*

*Performing Arts Supply, Betty Dickinson,*

*Marty Merritt, and students of Opera Workshop Class.*

*This production is made possible by arrangement with  
Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., publisher and copyright owner.*

This production is made possible by a generous  
endowment from the late Dr. Leon Wilson Clark.



# SYNOPSIS

## ACT I

*The Prologue explains that he has a manuscript written long ago by a governess who, because she was enamored with the handsome guardian of two children, agreed to take on the job of being solely responsible for the children. The rest of the tale is told in flashback, as the Governess recounts her story. She travels to Bly, a country house, and meets Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper, as well as her charges. She is delighted with the house and the children. A few weeks later, a letter from Miles' school arrives. The headmaster has expelled Miles without providing any explanation of his wrongdoing. Forbidden by her employer from contacting him for guidance, she resolves to ignore the letter, convinced that the children are innocent and beautiful.*

*Late one summer evening, the Governess walks the grounds of Bly. As she is fantasizing about her employer, a figure appears in the tower. At first she believes it to be the guardian, but she soon realizes that it is a frightening stranger. The stranger appears again later in the window of the house, staring at her. She describes the man to Mrs. Grose, who recognizes Peter Quint, the master's valet, from the description. She explains how Quint corrupted the children and Miss Jessel, and that both Quint and Jessel are now dead. Horrified, the Governess theorizes that Quint has come back as a ghost to look for Miles and that it is her duty to protect the children and their guardian.*

*Miles delights the Governess with his proficiency in reciting his Latin lesson, but he then sings a strange song to her that makes her suspect that all is not well with the young boy. Relaxing with Flora at the edge of a lake on the grounds of the house, as Flora sings a lullaby to her doll, the Governess sees a female figure beckoning to the little girl. The Governess believes that the apparition was Miss Jessel, and that Flora saw her as well, though she said nothing. She realizes that the ghosts have already communicated with the children, and that she is powerless to stop it.*

*Late at night, the ghosts appear to entice the children out of their beds and into the night. The Governess and Mrs. Grose search for them and scold them for being out of doors so late in the evening. Miles answers with a cryptic challenge to the Governess, saying, "You see, I am bad, aren't I?"—but is he referring to being out of bed late at night or to consorting with ghosts?*

## ACT II

*The second act opens in the middle of nowhere. The ghosts communicate with one another, and Miss Jessel appears to be the victim of Peter Quint, more than his partner. Both ghosts express their need for companionship and proclaim their intentions to possess the children, quoting a line from a Yeats poem, *The Second Coming*, "The ceremony of innocence is drowned." The Governess' soliloquy reflects her growing confusion and horror at what she is experiencing.*

*On a Sunday morning on the way to church, the children further terrorize the Governess by singing an oddly perverse Benedicite and Miles challenges her once again, demanding to know when he will be sent back to school and wondering if his guardian approves of the way the Governess is handling things. Desolate, the Governess resolves to leave Bly and its horrors, but when she returns to the house, she discovers Miss Jessel in the schoolroom. She confronts the ghost, and her courage is restored after she manages to banish the ghost from the room. She writes to the guardian, telling him that all is not well and that she must see him at once.*

*Late at night, Miles sings his strange troubled song alone in his bedroom. The Governess enters, and she tries to win the boy's confidence so that he will discuss what is bothering him so. The voice of Peter Quint is heard, and the Governess redoubles her efforts to get the boy to talk. The candle mysteriously goes out, and Miles claims credit for having blown it out, though the Governess does not believe him. After she exits, Quint tempts the child to steal the Governess' letter to the guardian, which he does.*



The next evening, Miles practices the piano. His astonishing virtuosity and Flora's repeat of her lullaby charm the Governess and Mrs. Grose into complacency, and Flora steals away into the night. When the Governess discovers that the little girl is missing, she and Mrs. Grose hurry off in pursuit. Shortly thereafter, Flora is discovered at the lake, evidently looking for something. The Governess decides it is time for a confrontation, and she directly questions the child about her dead governess. Miss Jessel appears; Flora admits nothing, and Mrs. Grose cannot see the ghost. Mrs. Grose believes the Governess is mistaken, that there is no ghost, and Flora, panicked, verbally assaults the Governess. As Flora is led away by Mrs. Grose, the Governess is left feeling even more alone in her struggle, having miserably failed with Flora.

The next morning, the Governess is determined to do better in her effort to save Miles. Mrs. Grose appears with Flora, and informs the Governess that, because of the horrors she has heard during the night from Flora, she now believes that the Governess is telling the truth. Mrs. Grose takes Flora away to her guardian in London, though both Mrs. Grose and the Governess realize that the letter informing him of the problem never reached its destination. Miles appears, and the Governess questions him strongly, forcing him to open up to her. He admits to stealing the letter, and Quint appears. The Governess and Quint battle over Miles, and finally, Miles names Peter Quint, banishing him forever. As Quint disappears, the Governess revels in her triumph over evil. But then she discovers the little boy is dead, and she realizes what she and the ghost have done, lamenting with Miles' strange song.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The beauty of the novella "The Turn of the Screw" lies in the skill with which author Henry James presents two interpretations simultaneously, leaving it to the reader to decide what is the real source of corruption which pervades the house at Bly: do the ghosts actually exist, or are they hallucinations caused by the Governess' repressed sexual desire for the handsome guardian of the children? By presenting the story as an autobiographical manuscript written from the point of view of the Governess, by masterfully careful plotting and with the ambiguous use of pronouns, James manages throughout the book to keep both stories alive.

Originally published in 1898, the story tapped into the popular trend of occultism; most of the book's first readers opted to believe that the children were being haunted by real specters, and that the Governess was well-intentioned in her efforts to save them. The second interpretation, that of a delusional, dangerously obsessive Governess who only imagines the ghosts, was suggested by critics familiar with the writings of Freud, who, at the time the novella was being written, was establishing himself as a leader in the field of psychology with studies of hysteria in women. James was certainly familiar with contemporary theories of psychic phenomena; his father and brother were members of "The Society for Psychical Research." Whether he had read Freud is not known, but he himself had a sister who was under treatment for "violent fits of hysteria," so he may well have been familiar with the symptoms which are convincingly displayed by the Governess — highly emotional states, confusion, missing time, obsessive behavior.

There are many other ambiguities in the book as well, some due to the more delicate sense of morality that nineteenth century customs demanded. What exactly did Miles do that caused him to be expelled from school? When Peter Quint was alive, what was the nature of his relationship with Miles? Does the Governess transfer her sexual desire from the guardian to Miles, causing her to become obsessed with the little boy? It is commonly assumed that pedophilia and homosexuality are implied in the text, but the hints are fairly obscure and rely heavily on innuendo to make their point.

No doubt drawn to the theme of the corruption of innocence, a common thread in many of his operas, Britten, writing in 1954 during another era in which dis-



cussion of aberrant sexual behavior was taboo, retained both the delicacy and the ambiguities of the original text. Transferring such a meticulously plotted story to the operatic stage while preserving these ambiguities was tremendously challenging, most especially because the audience actually sees and hears the ghosts and does not just depend on the eyes of the Governess to establish their presence. Piper and Britten took many opportunities to balance the seeming preference for the paranormal interpretation. The inclusion of the Prologue serves to establish that the point of view is that of the Governess throughout, and it sets up her motivation for her actions: her infatuation with her new employer, made even stronger than in the James version by her use of the words of a wedding vow to accept her new job. Another example is the obsessive and powerful music of the Governess at the beginning of Act Two, when she states: "I know nothing of evil yet I feel it, worse, imagine it," which seems to place the corruption in her own imagination.

Though many interpretations of this complex opera are possible, we have tried in our production to maintain the delicate balance crafted by both Henry James and by Britten and Piper, merely hinting at the implied sexuality and presenting both possibilities of the source of the evil simultaneously. As you experience tonight's opera, decide for yourself. Is Miles corrupted by the malevolent influence of specters from beyond the grave, or does the obsessive behavior of the insane Governess ultimately cause his destruction?

### SHEPHERD SCHOOL VOICE DEPARTMENT AND OPERA STUDIES FACULTY

Kathleen Kaun, Professor of Voice and Chair of the Voice Department  
Janet de Chambrier, Artist Teacher of Opera Studies  
Debra Dickinson, Artist Teacher of Opera Studies for Acting and Movement  
Susan Lorette Dunn, Lecturer in Voice  
Joyce Farwell, Professor of Voice  
Michael Franciosi, Artist Teacher of Opera Studies  
Thomas Jaber, Associate Professor of Music, Director of  
Choral Activities, and Vocal Coach  
Stephen King, Professor of Voice

### UPCOMING OPERA EVENTS

February 18, 19 and 20

*Opera Scenes Recital*

*featuring voice students of the Shepherd School.*

*All three performances at 7:30 p.m.*

*Worham Opera Theatre at Alice Pratt Brown Hall*

*Free admission. No tickets required.*

March 18 (8:00 p.m.) and March 20 (2:30 p.m.)

*Maestro Hans Graf conducts Mozart at the Shepherd School.*

*All-Mozart Program: **DaVIDe Penitente, K. 469** (Houston premiere), and selected opera excerpts, featuring Shepherd School vocal soloists, the Rice Chorale, and the Shepherd School Chamber Orchestra.*

*Stude Concert Hall. Admission (reserved seating): \$10; students and senior citizens \$8. For tickets call 713-348-8000.*



RICE



## BIOGRAPHIES

DEBRA DICKINSON is Artist Teacher of Opera Studies for Acting and Movement at the Shepherd School of Music. Ms. Dickinson was a professional singer and actress in New York for fifteen years before starting her career as a director. She performed with Richard Burton on Broadway in *Camelot* and as Guenevere opposite Richard Harris in the subsequent national tour. Favorite roles she has played include Jellylorum in the German language production of *Cats* at Theatre an der Wien in Vienna; Adriana in *The Boys from Syracuse* at the Goodspeed Opera; and Azuri in *The Desert Song* at Central City Opera and Chautauqua Opera. She began her directing career by serving as Assistant Director for *Naughty Marietta* at Beverly Sills' New York City Opera at Lincoln Center, and later she was the Associate Director of *The Pajama Game* there as well. Other directing credits include *Werther*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Albert Herring*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* here at the Shepherd School; *The Tender Land* at the Monteux Opera Festival in Maine; *A Grand Night for Singing* at the Pittsburgh Public Theater; *Die Fledermaus* at Florida State University; and *She Loves Me* and *The World Goes Round* at Stages, an Equity theater in Houston. Ms. Dickinson received an undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and a graduate degree from Hunter College in New York City. This winter she will direct for the apprentice program at the Hartford Opera. She has taught master classes in acting and movement for Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ebony Opera, and the Berkshire Opera; was the acting instructor for the Chautauqua Opera for four years; and was the recipient of the Shelfer Chair in Music Theater at Florida State University. She has been on the faculty of the Shepherd School for ten years, where she directs scenes programs and teaches Opera Workshop, Acting for Singers, Movement, and Directing. She also teaches workshops in auditioning for opera and musical theater, ballet, and waltz, and gives private aria coachings.

JAMES GAFFIGAN is currently in his second season as the Assistant Conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra and Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, having been appointed to these posts by Franz Welser-Möst in June 2003. Mr. Gaffigan will conduct Blossom concerts and his own subscription week in October 2005. Most recently, he received first prize in the Sir Georg Solti International Conductor's Competition in Frankfurt, Germany (September 2004). Mr. Gaffigan made his Cleveland Orchestra debut at the Blossom Festival in August of 2002. During the summers of 2000-2002, he was a conducting fellow at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, which is directed by David Zinman. In 2002, Mr. Gaffigan was the recipient of the first Robert Harth Conducting Award at Aspen. During the summer of 2003, he attended Tanglewood as a conducting fellow. Mr. Gaffigan served as music director of his first opera production, Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the Shepherd School of Music, in the spring of 2003, where he was enrolled in the graduate conducting program. He also led the Houston Symphony in rehearsal for Hans Graf during the 2002-03 season. Future engagements include concerts with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt Opera, and the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich, Switzerland. He will also lead concerts at the Oberlin Conservatory and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

James Gaffigan is a native of New York City, where he began musical studies at the LaGuardia High School of Music and Art, and in the Juilliard Preparatory Division. His undergraduate degree is from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where he worked closely with Boston Philharmonic conductor Benjamin Zander and received the first Benjamin Zander Conducting Fellowship. In May 2003, Mr. Gaffigan received his graduate degree in conducting from the Shepherd School, where he studied with Larry Rachleff.

MICHAEL FRANCIOSI began his professional career nearly twenty years ago and has been actively involved with opera ever since. He is currently Artist Teacher of Opera Studies at the Shepherd School of Music. Prior to his association with the Shepherd School, he was an assistant conductor with Houston Grand



Opera for seven seasons. Before his move to the Houston area, Mr. Franciosi resided in New York City, where he worked as a vocal coach and recital accompanist. He has also been a guest assistant conductor with the San Francisco Opera Center, Greater Miami Opera, Sarasota Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Opera/Omaha, and The Santa Fe Opera. In Europe, Mr. Franciosi was a guest coach at the European Center for Opera and Vocal Art in Belgium for several seasons, and he also participated with the company in two residencies at the National Theatre in Prague. Mr. Franciosi is a native of Cumberland, Maryland, and received his undergraduate degree from West Virginia University and his graduate degree from the Manhattan School of Music.

## CAST

BEAU GIBSON hails from Knoxville, Tennessee. He received a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Kentucky and is in the second year of the Master's program at the Shepherd School of Music. Mr. Gibson was most recently seen as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at St. Ivo alla Sapienza in Rome this past summer. He will be heard next March as a soloist in an all-Mozart concert with the Shepherd School Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Hans Graf of the Houston Symphony. Mr. Gibson is a voice student of Dr. Stephen King.

STACIA MORGAN, a native of Galveston, Texas, is currently a second-year Master's candidate at the Shepherd School, studying voice with Dr. Stephen King. Miss Morgan received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Houston's Moores School of Music. She was seen last season at the Shepherd School as Florence Pike in Britten's *Albert Herring*. She has also performed the role of Vendor in Argento's *Casanova's Homecoming*, which was recorded and recently released by Newport Classics. Miss Morgan will be heard as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in our upcoming scenes program in February, and will be a soloist in the Mozart concert in March.

ANGELA MORTELLARO, a native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is in her first year of a Master's program at the Shepherd School of Music. Last May, she completed her Bachelor's degree at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and currently studies voice under the direction of Dr. Stephen King. In March, she will be featured as a soloist in the Mozart oratorio *Davide Penitente* and as Susannah in an excerpt from *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the Shepherd School Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Maestro Hans Graf.

JUDSON PERRY, who is in the second year of his Master's degree at the Shepherd School, is a native of Johnson City, Tennessee. He appeared here as Schmidt in *Werther* last year and as a soloist in *Carmina Burana* with the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra. He will be heard this March as Idamante, Belmonte, and Don Ottavio in our all-Mozart concert with the Shepherd School Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Hans Graf. Mr. Perry is a student of Dr. Stephen King.

A native of Chicago, NICOLE RODIN is a second year undergraduate. She is a student of Kathleen Kaun. While she has appeared in numerous musical theater performances, Ms. Rodin is thrilled to be appearing in her first operatic role. She is about to make her directorial debut with the Weiss Table Top Theater presentation of *Cabaret* this spring.

MARIANNA SURI was born on the island of Cyprus. She graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from Mercyhurst College and will graduate with a Master of Music degree from the Shepherd School of Music this spring. Ms. Suri has appeared as Mimi in *La Bohème* and as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*. Last spring, Ms. Suri made her Houston Symphony debut, appearing as Ilia in excerpts from *Idomeneo*. She studies voice with Kathleen Kaun.

EMILY VACEK, a native Houstonian, is a double degree candidate at Rice University in voice and psychology. She is a third year undergraduate, studying voice with Kathleen Kaun. Miss Vacek will be heard in this February's opera scenes program as Zerlina in a scene from *Don Giovanni*.