

Wharton
Community
Players

*A Midsummer
Night's Dream*

Arise!

40th Anniversary
Performing Arts School
WhartonARTS

Helen H. Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director

2025
2026
SEASON

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Dear **Wharton Arts** Community,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 season at Wharton Arts! I'm thrilled to invite you into a year that dares us to dream boldly, listen deeply, and arise together with purpose. Our theme, **Arise!**, calls us to create with courage and connect across generations and cultures through **Artistry, Representation, Inspiration, Self-Expression, and Empathy**. This season, **Arise!** is more than a theme—it's an invitation to action. In a world yearning for light, we turn to the arts to uplift voices, spark imagination, and celebrate the brilliance of our students, faculty, and teaching artists. Through meaningful learning, inspired teaching, dynamic performances, and inclusive programming, we'll build a vibrant community rooted in creativity, collaboration, and hope.

Let us arise together!

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen H. Cha-Pyo".

Helen H. Cha-Pyo
Artistic Director

Spring invites us to look ahead with optimism, purpose, and renewed energy. I am truly delighted to be part of Wharton Arts at this exciting and pivotal moment in our history.

My connection to this organization is deeply personal. For thirteen years, I watched my own children grow and thrive as members of the New Jersey Youth Chorus. The joy, artistic training, and personal growth they gained here were transformative for our family. Driven by a desire to steward that same experience for future generations, I joined the Board of Trustees two years ago. Now, as Interim Executive Director, I am committed to providing the steady leadership and strategic vision necessary to ensure more families can find the same inspiration and community we did.

At the heart of our future is the integration of our four signature programs: the **New Jersey Youth Chorus, New Jersey Youth Symphony, Paterson Music Project, and Performing Arts School**. Together, they form a connected artistic pathway that nurtures young people at every stage of their creative journey. By strengthening collaboration across these programs, expanding access, and deepening our community impact, we are creating opportunities that extend far beyond the stage.

While each program has its own distinct voice, all are guided by a shared belief in the transformative power of the performing arts. Thank you for being part of this journey. I look forward to all we will create together this spring and beyond.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erika V. Fanelle".

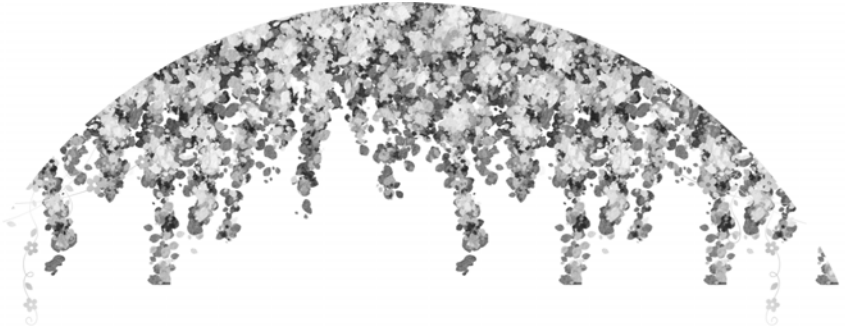
Erika Fanelle
Trustee, Interim Executive Director



Creating our future, together.

WhartonCommunityPlayers

Presents



A Midsummer Night's Dream

By

William Shakespeare



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STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**



Made possible by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

CAST

Hippolyta	AMANDA CORTINAS
Theseus	BRETT LAROSE
Egeus	ALAN NIEBUHR
Hermia	ALLEGRA MIROZ
Lysander	MICHAEL BUCK
Helena	RACHEL LEWIS
Demetrius	ANDREW KRAUTHEIM
Oberon	KC BOYLE
Titania	CHRISTINE TALARICO
Puck	BRENNA KNIGHT
Nick Bottom	NICK FOIL
Francis Flute	SCOTT CAGNEY
Peter Quince	DAVID HOFFMAN
Robin Starveling	JENNA BURKE
Tomasina Snout	JENN CRANE TURNER
Snug	JOE MICELI
FAIRIES:	
Cobweb	MILO LIPMAN
Thistle	CHRISTIAN PIAZZA
Peaseblossom	MAYZIE MARKEY
Mustardseed	AVERY OGHIA
Willow	ALEXANDRA POSARYCKI
Clover	ISABELLA HUDSON
Moth	ALLIE PELLETIER

ARTISTIC TEAM

Direction	LILLI MARKEY
Stage Manager	SUZI OGHIA
Set Design	EMMA PATANELLA
Lights and Sound	ROGER SWEET



A Midsummer Night's Dream

Director's Note

Welcome! One of the things I love most about *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is that it reminds us how wonderfully messy it is to be human. Shakespeare fills this play with lovers chasing one another, actors chasing their dreams, and fairies chasing a bit of mischief. Beneath the comedy, however, is a story about transformation—about how love, friendship, and even our mistakes can change us in unexpected ways.

This production would not have been possible without the incredible dedication of this cast and crew. Their creativity, hard work, and willingness to embrace the joy and silliness of Shakespeare's world have brought this story to life in ways that continually amazed me throughout the rehearsal process.

Thank you for joining us on this midsummer adventure. Whether you're experiencing Shakespeare for the first time or returning to a familiar favorite, I hope you find yourself laughing, dreaming, and believing.

Enjoy the show!

LILLI MARKEY
Director

CAST



KC BOYLE



MICHAEL BUCK



JENNA BURKE



SCOTT CAGNEY



AMANDA CORTINAS



JENN CRANE TURNER



NICK FOIL



DAVID HOFFMAN



ISABELLA HUDSON



BRENNA KNIGHT



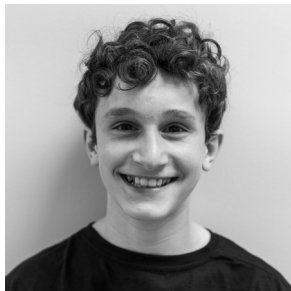
ANDREW KRAUTHEIM



BRETT LAROSE



RACHEL LEWIS



MILO LIPMAN



MAYZIE MARKEY



JOE MICELI



ALLEGRA MROZ



ALAN NIEBUHR



AVERY OGHIA



ALLIE PELLETIER



CHRISTIAN PIAZZA



ALEXANDRA POSARYCKI



CHRISTINE TALARICO

CREATIVE TEAM



LILLI MARKEY



SUZI OGHIA



EMMA PATANELLA



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WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

KC BOYLE (Oberon) is excited to make his Wharton Community Players debut in this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. KC appeared in this play twice before. In high school, KC portrayed Peter Quince. In college, KC played both Oberon and Theseus in a production directed by a psychology professor. These early experiences cultivated a life-long appreciation of Shakespeare and theatre. KC thanks this talented cast and crew for yet another enriching experience.

MICHAEL BUCK (Lysander) is a New Jersey based performer, thrilled to be making his Wharton Community Players debut! Most previously seen in *Batboy: The Musical* (Catalyst Theater Company), and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (Asbury Park Theater Company). As always, thank you to his family and friends for their constant love and support.

JENNA BURKE (Starveling) returns to Wharton Arts after directing *Much Ado About Nothing* (2024) and *The Moors* by Jen Silverman (2025) for WCP and her third year at the helm of the Performing Art School's tween Shakespeare camp in Summer 2025. Other favorite community theatre credits include directing *The Good John Proctor* for Chester Theatre Group (2025) and directing *The SpongeBob Musical: Youth Edition* for The Summit Playhouse (2023). When not at a community theater rehearsal, you can find Jenna teaching language arts and stage managing the productions at Roosevelt Intermediate School in Westfield. Many thanks to Lilli for this opportunity and to Nick for convincing me to audition and being my forever-carpool companion.

SCOTT CAGNEY (Francis Flute) was named the 2008 KCACTF Region II Best Partner while attending Montclair State University, where he received a BA in Theatre Studies and served as Artistic Director/President of a student run theatre group called Players. Scott is a Founding Member and Artistic Director of StrangeDog Theatre and has performed in and directed many of their productions. Scott is also a stand up comedian (2014 StandUp360 Comedy Festival Finalist), a founding member of the sketch comedy group Take Care Now (2021 Battle of the Sketches People's Champion and 2022 NJ Webfest Best Sketch), and co-host of The Trilogy Podcast.

AMANDA CORTINAS (Hippolyta) is delighted and grateful to be part of this production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* under the direction of Lilli Marques Markey. Amanda's theatre credits include leading roles such as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Emily in *Our Town*, and Cinderella in multiple productions. She recently made her Off-Broadway debut in *Forgotten Corners of Your Dark, Dark Place* at Theatre Row. Additional credits include *One Life to Live*, where she originated the part of Adriana, and numerous original and multicultural theatre productions. Amanda holds a BA in Drama, Speech, and Communications from Marymount College, and studied at Marymount's London Drama School. She is also a bilingual educator and creative

artist passionate about storytelling, language, and connection. Endless love and gratitude goes to her mom, Carmen, family, friends, fellow artists, and her beloved Bichon, Buddy Valentine, for their constant love and support.

JENNIFER CRANE TURNER (Snug): is thrilled to be making her debut with the Wharton Community Players. Other Shakespeare roles she's performed in the past include Maria in *Twelfth Night* and Margaret in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Jennifer has also done voice-overs for several NJ Pharmaceutical companies and is the founder and Artistic Director of JAM Theater Company in Morris County NJ. Special thanks to the cast and crew for their humor and her wonderful family for their love and support.

NICK FOIL (Nick Bottom) returns for his second show with the Wharton Community Players. A few of his favorite roles include Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol*; Seward in *Dracula: a Feminist Revenge Fantasy*, Really; Lestrade/Moriarty in *Ms. Holmes and Ms. Watson, Apt 2B*; Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*; Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice* (NJACT nomination); and Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility*. He'd like to thank Lilli and Suzi for their wonderful vision for this forest, and the cast for their support and incredible energy—and also Jenna, who is the best.

DAVID HOFFMAN (Peter Quince) has appeared on professional and community stages for the past 40 years. Favorite roles include *Sylvia* (Greg), *A Doll's House* (Dr. Rank), *All My Sons* (Frank Luby), *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* (Dr. Spivey), *Little Foxes* (Ben), *Lost In Yonkers* (Uncle Louie), *Sideman* (Ziggy), *The Misanthrope* (Clitandre), and *Alien Boy* (boy), which won an OOB Award as part of a program of new One-Acts. Off stage, David is the Artistic Director of Cafe Theatre, producing programs of 10-Minute Plays at 12-Miles West Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Tierney's Tavern, and currently at the Madison Community Arts Center. During the day, Mr. Hoffman teaches math at St. Benedict's Preparatory School.

ISABELLA HUDSON (Clover) is super excited to join this production of *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. Isabella has returned to the stage after having performed in *Scooby Doo* during the summer of 2025. Other than performing on stage, Isabella also performs as a Hip Hop Dancer at Northeast Dance Project. When not performing, she loves to ski, swim, and hang with her friends. HUGE Hugs to Mom, Dad, and little sister (Brielle) for all their support.

BRENNA KNIGHT (Puck) is delighted to return for her fourth production with the Wharton Community Players, following appearances in *Next to Normal* (Ensemble), *The Moors* (Marjory/Mallory), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Dogberry/Margaret/Friar). Previous credits with the Chester Theater Group include *Dracula* (Marilla/Maid), *Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson, Apt. 2B* (Adler/Hudson/Drebber), and *Pride & Prejudice* (Lydia/Lady Catherine). By day, Brenna works in HR as a Senior Manager of

Compensation—a job she unironically loves. Endless thanks to this magical cast and crew, and to her personal band of “foolish mortals” (family and friends) who continue to support her theatrical adventures. Cheers!

ANDREW KRAUTHEIM (Demetrius) is honored to be a part of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Wharton Community Players! Previously seen on stage in *Hamlet* at The Stag & Lion Theatre Company in NYC and off-Broadway in *Father Anonymous* at the AMT Theater, Andrew works in both theatre and film. He thanks his family and friends for their love, and wishes the best to this amazing group! Training: Atlantic Acting School, NYU Tisch BFA. Website: bit.ly/krautheim

BRETT LAROSE (Theseus) is making his Wharton Community Players debut. Past credits include *Church & State*, *All My Sons*, and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*. He has also appeared in other venues including three seasons with NYRF, George Street Playhouse Touring Theatre, Theatre-Studio Inc., Vital Theatre Company, and National Actors Theatre.

RACHEL LEWIS (Helena) is delighted to join this stellar cast and make her debut with the Wharton Community Players! After earning her BFA in Musical Theatre from UWF, she spent several years studying, apprenticing, and performing with theatres and studios across Florida, Atlanta, Portland (OR), and New York City. Now settled in the Garden State with her New Jersey wife, Rachel recently appeared as Maria in *Mr. Burns* with Studio Players and as Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* with Shakespeare 70.

MILO LIPMAN (Cobweb) is happy to return to Wharton's stage where he has participated in many performances in the past. Recent roles at Wharton include Beetlejuice in *Beetlejuice Jr.*, Grover in *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, and a Wickersham in *Seussical* with Wharton Community Players. Other favorite roles include Linus in *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Roxbury Arts Alliance), Winthrop in *The Music Man* (Summit Playhouse), and Dickon in *The Secret Garden* (Trilogy Repertory). Milo has also participated in The Showplace Ice Cream Parlor's Minis program on Long Beach Island as a singing waiter. Milo spends a lot of time practicing circus arts and performing in his family circus show as a juggler and unicyclist. When not performing, he loves to draw and particularly enjoys animation.

MAYZIE MARKEY (Peaseblossom) is excited to be playing Peaseblossom, a fairy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*! She is especially happy to share the stage with her best friends as the other fairies. Some of Mayzie's favorite past roles include the title roles in *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Rapunzel*, Ladybug in *James and the Giant Peach*, and the Fairy God Moth in *Spiderella*. Most recently, she played Daphne in a summer camp production of *Scooby Doo*. When she's not on stage, Mayzie loves playing with her dog Millie, dancing, listening to music, doing nails and

makeup, and creating art. She would like to send a little fairy dust to her mom & dad and three older brothers for always cheering her on.

JOE MICELI (Snug) is excited to work with the Wharton Players again after playing Count Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing* and creating the set for *The Moors*. Recently, he portrayed Dick Bernly and ensemble roles in InterACT's *9 to 5*. He spends his brief free time offstage as an AP Calculus and AP Computer Science teacher at Governor Livingston HS where he also directs their Plays and Musicals.

ALLEGRA MROZ (Hermia) is excited to be returning to the stage at Wharton Community Players. Previous credits include Lizzie Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* with Chester Theatre Group, and Cecily Cardew in *The Importance of Being Earnest* with Lord Stirling Theater Company. Both performances received NJACT nominations for "Outstanding Lead Actress in a Play". Other favorite credits include Agatha in *The Moors*, Fabiana Aziza Cunningham in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and Olivia in *Twelfth Night*. Allegra would like to thank the cast and crew of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for such a magical experience, and hopes the audience will enjoy their time in the woods!

ALAN NIEBUHR (Egeus) is a graduate of Montclair State University's Acting program and has worked as an actor, director and stage manager on numerous theatre and film productions in New York and New Jersey. Over the years, he has originated the characters of Frederick Loren in *House on Haunted Hill* and John Malvern in *American Dreamers*; played father figures Eddie in *Lost in Yonkers*, Eric Osburn in *The Grand Tour* and Uncle Leonard in *These Mistakes*. He has also played roles in several sci-fi short films, including *Simulated Theory*, *What's Left Behind* and *Stirrup and the Ground*.

AVERY OGHIA (Mustardseed) is thrilled to be appearing as the fairy Mustardseed, in her very first production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*! She has had so much fun learning about theater, bringing a little magic to the stage, and making new friends throughout the rehearsal process. When she's not rehearsing, Avery loves practicing Muay Thai, baking sweet treats, and spending time with her cats. Avery would like to thank her mom, who is the stage manager, along with her dad, brother, and three cats for all their love, support, and encouragement!

ALEXANDRA (ALLIE) PELLETIER (Moth) is excited to be playing Moth, one of the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She is especially happy to share the stage with her best friends, who are playing the other fairies. This is Allie's second appearance on the Wharton Arts stage. Most recently, she appeared in the ensemble of *Scooby Doo* in Summer 2025. Offstage, Allie enjoys gymnastics, creating art, and spending time with her friends. She hopes you enjoy the show!

CHRISTIAN PIAZZA (Thistle) is thrilled to be performing in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*! A member of the Wharton Performing Arts family since

2022, Christian discovered his love for acting while attending the Performing Arts School Summer Camp, where he made his stage debut in *Willy Wonka*. What started as a summer adventure quickly turned into a passion, and he has returned every year since—while also participating in Wharton’s after-school theater programs.

To date, Christian has performed in more than nine productions, including *Scooby-Doo*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Greatest Showman*, *The Peanuts Gang*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Wonka*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Emperor’s New Dress*. He loves bringing characters to life, making audiences laugh, and spending time with his theater friends.

When he’s not memorizing lines or taking a bow, Christian can usually be found swimming, building creative LEGO creations, spending time with family and friends, and finding new ways to make people laugh.

ALEXANDRA POZARYCKI (Willow) is thrilled to play Willow, a fairy in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*! She is especially happy to share the stage and create memories with her best friends. After discovering her love for theatre this past summer in *Scooby-Doo* at Wharton, Alexandra is excited to keep exploring the stage. Offstage, she channels her creativity into dancing, listening to music, and doing makeup. Alexandra sends a sprinkle of fairy dust to her mom, dad, brother, aunts, uncles, cousins, Nana, Grampy, and Pop-Pop. Thank you for always cheering her on!

CHRISTINE TALARICO (Titania) is grateful to return to Wharton Community Players! Select acting credits include *The Good John Proctor*, *Cry It Out*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Tragedy: a tragedy*, *Sense & Sensibility* (NJACT Nomination), *Twelfth Night* (NJACT Nomination), *Bell, Book and Candle*, and *Talk Radio*. She sends love to her family and friends (including those in the cast!), and thanks to Lilli for this wonderful opportunity to make some Shakespearean mischief and magic.

WHO’S WHO IN THE CREATIVE TEAM

LILLI MARKEY (Director) is making her directorial debut with *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and couldn’t imagine a more magical production to begin this journey. As a drama instructor at Wharton Institute of Performing Arts, she is passionate about helping young performers find confidence, creativity, and joy on stage.

With a rich background as a performer, Lilli has worked with New Jersey theatre companies including Alliance Repertory Theatre Company, The Bickford Theatre, The Theater Project, Women’s Theater Company, The Cameo Cast, and The Shoestring Players. She brings that experience into her directing, with a focus on storytelling that is imaginative, grounded, and full of heart.

She's incredibly grateful to this wildly talented cast for bringing such dedication, humor, and enchantment to this production—and a special thank you to our amazing stage manager, Suzi for keeping the magic beautifully organized behind the scenes.

So much love to her husband, Brian, and their beautiful children—Aiden, Blaise, Jace, and Mayzie—for being her greatest inspiration. Special thanks to her mom for sharing her incredible talent through costume creations, and loving thoughts to her dad, whose strength continues to inspire her.

SUZI OGHIA (Stage Manager) is excited to return to community theatre after many years away, having previously stage managed Country Club, Comic Potential, and Closer. She is grateful to her cousin Lilli for this opportunity and has loved spending extra time with her and getting to know the talented and hilarious cast. She is delighted to share this experience with her daughter Avery, who is appearing as a fairy in her very first show. Special thanks to her son Jack and to her husband Chris for handling bedtime while she stayed late at rehearsals.

EMMA PATANELLA (Set Design) is a rising junior at the University of Delaware double majoring in Theatre Production and Communications. She recently stage managed the University's production of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and previously stage managed productions throughout all four years of high school. Emma is passionate about theatre production and enjoys helping bring stories to life through creativity, collaboration and organization behind the scenes.

ROGER SWEET (Lights and Sound) is the Production Manager of Wharton Arts. An alumnus of NJYS, he is a singer and multi-instrumentalist. He has been the A/V technician for plays like *Defying Gravity* and *Next to Normal*, along with musicals like *Seussical*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *High School Musical*, and *Beetlejuice Jr.*



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Wharton Arts



Performing Arts School



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Wharton Arts respects the needs of individuals with disabilities who are assisted by a companion (or companions) when participating in our programs. We understand that companions may either be individuals or service animals. We will make every effort to accommodate companion situations with regard to seating, mobility, and other needs as they arise for all our programs.

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Helen H. Cha-Pyo, Artistic Director

2025-2026

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WHARTON ARTS

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Wharton Arts' mission is to offer accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds inclusive communities.

Wharton Arts' vision is for a transformative performing arts education in an inclusive community to be accessible for everyone.

Wharton Arts is New Jersey's largest independent non-profit community performing arts education center serving nearly 2,000 students through a range of classes and ensembles. The 5 ensembles of the **New Jersey Youth Chorus**, an auditioned choral ensemble program for students in grades 3-12, encourage a love and appreciation of choral music while nurturing personal growth and creative development. The 15 ensembles of the **New Jersey Youth Symphony**, which serve over 500 students in grades 3-12 by audition, inspire young people to achieve musical excellence through high-level ensemble training and performance opportunities. Based in Paterson, the **Paterson Music Project** is an El Sistema-inspired program of Wharton Arts that uses music education as a vehicle for social action by empowering and inspiring young people to achieve their full potential through the community experience of ensemble learning and playing.

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Wharton Arts is located in Berkeley Heights, New Providence, and Paterson, NJ and reaches students from 12 counties. All of Wharton Arts' extraordinary teaching artists, faculty members, and conductors hold degrees in their teaching specialty and have been vetted and trained to enable our students to achieve their personal best.

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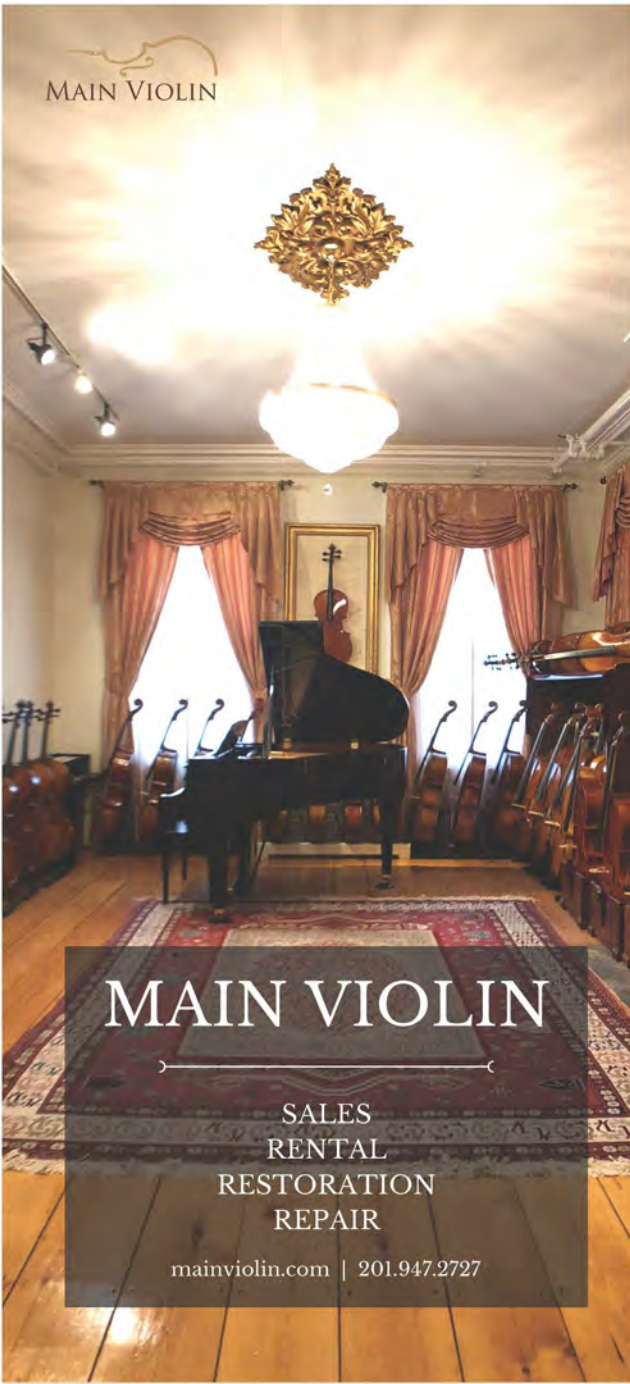


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