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JOSHUA BORTHS

DIRECTOR

Joshua Borths (he/him) is a nationally recognized stage director, writer, and dramaturg. Known for his creative, emotional, and insightful productions, Borths's work has been lauded as "beautiful, even poetic." (Opera Today)

Recently, Borths premiered a critically acclaimed production of ***The Flying Dutchman*** at Des Moines Metro Opera (DMMO), starring Ryan McKinny and Julie Adams. The production "thrillingly met the substantial challenges of Wagner's seminal work." (Opera Today) Both his staging and character development was lauded with one reviewer noting that "in less capable hands, these characters might come across as one-dimensional, but Borths gave them depth that was refreshing but still true to Wagner's vision." (Little Village) Borths returns to Des Moines Metro Opera in 2026 to stage a new production of Puccini's ***Tosca***, starring Laura Wilde in the title role.



In addition to ***The Flying Dutchman*** in the 2024/25 season, Borths directed a new production of ***Hansel and Gretel*** for Opera Montana. In 2025/26, Borths returns to DMMO to direct a new production of *Tosca* after directing new productions of ***Three Decembers***, ***La traviata***, ***Béatrice et Bénédict***, and ***Dialogues of the Carmelites***.

Borths is currently the Director of Opera Theatre at James Madison University (JMU), Company Dramaturg at DMMO, and Digital Preview Lecturer at Virginia Opera. In his role as Company Dramaturg at DMMO, Borths contributed to the company's nomination for the International Opera Awards in 2024 (Best Festival). Previously, Borths served as the Resident Scholar at Virginia Opera; the Director of Opera & Musical Theater and Professor of Music History at Capital University in Columbus, OH; and as Director of Education & Resident Stage Director at Arizona Opera.

Past favorites include new productions of ***The Falling and the Rising*** and ***Beauty and the Beast*** for DMMO); ***Rusalka***, ***Florencia en el Amazonas***, and ***Il barbiere di Siviglia*** for Arizona Opera; ***Hansel and Gretel*** and ***The Tragedy of Carmen*** for Opera Memphis; ***Madama Butterfly*** at Pensacola Opera; ***La clemenza di Tito*** for the University of Maryland; ***Suor Angelica***, ***Oklahoma!***, and ***Der Kaiser von Atlantis*** for Crested Butte Music Festival; and ***L'elisir d'amore*** for Opera Las Vegas. As a stage director of musical theatre, Borths has directed ***Parade***; ***Camelot***; ***Kiss Me, Kate*** and ***The Music Man***. Borths has also directed gala performances featuring Frederica von Stade and Joyce DiDonato and staged the southeastern premieres of ***Soldier Songs*** and ***La Hija de Rappaccini***.



As an assistant director, Borths has worked with Arizona Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Festival della Valle d'Itria in Martina Franca, Italy. Borths's work as an assistant director contributed to the world premiere of Geter/Palmer's **American Apollo** receiving an Emmy Award nomination in 2025.

Additionally, Borths has hosted podcasts; written acclaimed surtitle translations; and publicly interviewed illustrious artists including Jake Heggie, Gregory Spears, David T. Little, Jonathan Dove, Damien Geter, Thomas Mallon, and Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author Jane Smiley. He also served as the director/dramaturg for the **Loving v. Virginia** libretto workshop at Virginia Opera.

An active and engaging lecturer, Borths is regularly sought out by companies and opera fans alike. In addition to exponentially growing the prelude lectures at DMMO, Borths has given presentations at the Triangle Wagner Society, Wagner Society Manchester, with upcoming engagements at the Wagner Society of Scotland, Wagner Society of New York and Wagner Society of Southern California.

As an educator, Borths has taught at Shenandoah University, been a Visiting Professor at the Crane School of Music (SUNY Potsdam), directed Maryland Opera Studio, and served as a guest panelist for Opera America. He collaborated with TED Ed on its first opera resources and was featured in Opera News for his innovative approach to opera education.

Originally from Cincinnati, OH, Borths holds undergraduate degrees in Musicology and Vocal Performance with an emphasis in Opera Direction from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in Opera Production from Florida State University.

Current as of December 16, 2025