

# THE GOLDEN FISH

DEC 7 - JAN 7



 SYNETIC  
THEATER  
@SyneticTheater



## ABOUT **SYNETIC** THEATER

### **SYNTHESIS**

*Combining  
distinct elements  
to form a whole*

### **KINETIC**

*Pertaining to  
or imparting motion:  
active, dynamic, energetic*



### **SYNETIC**

*a dynamic synthesis of the arts*

### **MISSION**

*Synetic creates unforgettable  
visceral narrative experiences  
for every audience by  
blending visual techniques  
and movement from around  
the world and training  
multidisciplinary artists  
of all ages.*





SYNETIC THEATER PRESENTS

DECEMBER 7, 2023 - JANUARY 7, 2022

# THE GOLDEN FISH

DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER

**Irina Tsikurishvili~**

RESIDENT DRAMATURG/ADAPTOR

**Nathan Weinberger\***

RESIDENT COMPOSER

**Koki Lortkipanidze\***

SCENIC DESIGNER/TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

**Phil Charlwood**

COSTUME DESIGNER

**Evgenia L. Salazar**

LIGHTING DESIGNERS

**Dominic DeSalvio/Hailey LaRoe**

SOUND ENGINEER

**Brandon Cook**

STAGE MANAGER

**Finlay Kuester**

PRODUCTION MANAGER

**Mark Carmouze**

**Alex F. Keen** ..... Master Electrician

**Susannah Cai** ..... Lighting Board Programmer & Operator

**Alexa Duimstra** ..... Associate Costume Designer

**Joshua Stout** ..... Assistant Stage Manager/Wardrobe

**Ana Tsikurishvili** ..... A1

~Founding Choreographer \*Company Member

*This production runs approximately 45 minutes.*

This project was supported, in part, by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which receives support from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

This program is supported in part by Arlington County through the Arlington Cultural Affairs division of Arlington Economic Development and the Arlington Commission for the Arts. This program is also supported by the National Landing Business Improvement District, and JBG Smith.

*Synetic Theater is honored to call Arlington, Virginia home. We wish to acknowledge that long before this land was ever known as Arlington, it belonged to the Nacotchtank (Anacostan) and Piscataway people. We honor the original inhabitants of this land as we continue our mission to provide an inclusive and diverse artistic space.*



arlington arts



## CAST

GOLDEN FISH

**Maryam Najafzada\***

OLD MAN

**Irakli Kavsadze\***

WIFE

**Kaitlyn Shiflett\***

ENSEMBLE

**Josh Lucas\***

NARRATOR

**Alex Mills\***

UNDERSTUDIES

**Lev Belolipetski\*, Natan-Maël Gray,**

**Hannah Chester**

\*Company Member

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I'd like to welcome you all to 'The Tale of the Golden Fish', a timeless fairytale that has appeared across many cultures throughout the world over the past two centuries. You may already know the story. Chances are, you were told some version of it when you were a child—the tale of a hapless fisherman who catches a magical fish capable of granting anything he desires. Much of the story's magic comes from the way each adaptation, each viewing, triggers tiny flickers of memory somewhere in the back of your mind. Once you begin to realize you know it, the surprise of recognition activates you. It takes you back to the moment you first heard the tale.

Like many of Synetic's productions, what drew us to this story is its accessibility and universality, the fact that it has something for everyone, young and old alike. But as whimsical and funny as it is at times, this is also a tale of greed and humanity's inability to appreciate what we have—the fisherman's wife wishing for a new washtub before ultimately demanding an empire. She goes mad with power as she grasps for more and more, eventually transforming into a wicked tyrant. For all its lighthearted charm, in the end, this is a cautionary tale that warns us against the dangers and destructiveness of outsized ambition.

As always, thanks to our wonderful cast, crew, and staff for their outstanding efforts in bringing this story to life. I'm especially excited to see the versatility of our company on full display in this production, a wonderful combination of Synetic veterans and newer company members: Alex Mills, who has played such diverse roles as Richard III, Puck, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; Irakli Kavsadze, so powerful as Lear, Bottom, and Macbeth, among many other legendary characters; as well as Maryam Najafzada, Cyrano de Bergerac's balletic Roxanne. We also have some of our up-and-coming talents onstage—Josh Lucas and three graduates of our teen company, Kaitlyn Shiflett and understudies Natan Mael-Grey and Lev Belolipetski, whose extraordinary abilities have been developed with us since their preteen years and have added immeasurably to the quality of this production.

Madloba,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Tsikurishvili'.

**Irina Tsikurishvili** FOUNDING CHOREOGRAPHER AND  
ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



**Maryam Najafzada** (GOLDEN FISH) graduated from the Baku Choreography Academy and is a classically trained dancer originally from Baku, Azerbaijan. She has numerous dance credits with the Azerbaijan Opera and Ballet Theater, Azerbaijan Musical Theater, and Manassas Ballet Theatre including *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Thumbelina*, *La Bayadere*, *Cinderella*, *Don Quixote*, *Seven Beauties*, among others. She was recently on Synetic's stage as the Horse Spirit in the production of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, Roxanne in *Cyrano De Bergerac*, Lady Ann in *Richard III*, Miranda in *Tempest*, and Christine in *Phantom of the Opera*, Raven in *Madness of Poe*, Smeraldina in *Servant of two Masters*, Deer in *Host & Guest* and Dracula's wife in *Dracula*. Maryam also directed and performed with Synetic Motion Pictures and was part of "The Decameron" series project as well as other short films. Maryam is a choreographer and teaches ballet, character dance, and pantomime.



**Irakli Kavsadze** (OLD MAN) is a Founding Company Member. His recent credits include: *Beauty and the Beast* (Jean Paul); *King Lear* (King Lear); *Macbeth* (Macbeth); *Twelfth Night* (Malvolio); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bottom); *Romeo and Juliet* (Friar Lawrence); and many more. In 2018 he directed "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in the Republic of Georgia. He has also appeared in multiple films including "Crime has Happened" and most recently "Brighton 4th" which received the award for "Best International Narrative Feature Film" at Tribeca Film Festival in 2021. He has received 10 Helen Hayes nominations for acting and sound design with Synetic Theater and has received 3 Helen Hayes Awards for sound design, most recently for *Host & Guest* 2022.



**Kaitlyn Shiflett** (WIFE) is thrilled to be a part of yet another spooky production here at Synetic Theater. Kaitlyn is currently pursuing a BFA in theater performance at George Mason University. She is a proud alum of Synetic's Teen Company. Her past Synetic acting credits include: *Dracula* (Wives & Mina U/S), *Host & Guest* (U/S), and Synetic Teen Company's *Romeo and Juliet* (Lady Capulet). Kaitlyn would like to extend her gratitude to all of her friends and mentors that have helped her get to where she is today. @kaitlynshiflett



**Josh Lucas** (ENSEMBLE) is a DC based actor, dancer, teaching artist, and theatrical carpenter. He has worked primarily with Synetic Theater, credits include *The Tempest* (Stephano), *Snow Queen* (Kai), *The Phantom of the Opera* (ensemble), "Day 6, Story 4" of *The Decameron*, *Shakespeare Revue*, *Cinderella* (understudy), and *Servant of Two Masters* (understudy).

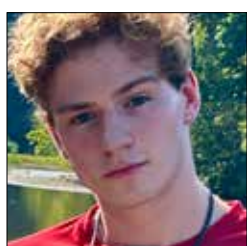


**Alex Mills** (NARRATOR) Local credits include Studio Theatre: *Wig Out!*, *Torch Song Trilogy*, *2-2 Tango*, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* Signature Theatre: *Shakespeare's R&J* Synetic Theater: *The Tempest*, *Richard III*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Man in the Iron Mask*, *Three Men in a Boat* (to say nothing of the dog) (Helen Hayes Nomination: Outstanding Supporting Actor) *Othello* (Helen Hayes Nomination: Outstanding Lead Actor) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helen Hayes Nomination: Outstanding Supporting Actor)

## UNDERSTUDIES



**Lev Belolipetski** is a proud Teen Company alumni, and excited to work on his fifth production with Synetic's mainstage. Previous credits include: Synetic Teen Company: *Hamlet* (Horatio/Player King/Ensemble) *Twelfth Night* (Feste/Ensemble) Synetic Company: *Midsummer* (Lysander) *Host and Guest* (Ensemble) *Dracula* (Ensemble) *Beauty and the Beast* (Ensemble). Lev hopes you enjoy the show!



**Natan-Maël Gray** is, in a way, a conjunction between the sun of Virginia and the ice of Québec. After several years of competitive gymnastics, swimming, dance and bodybuilding, Natan-Maël has found his second home at Synetic Theater. A member of the Teen Company since 2018, Natan has appeared in the roles of Petruchio, Sebastian, Laertes, Tybalt and Oberon. He made his professional debut with Synetic Theater in 2022 as both an understudy and in the role of a villager in *Host & Guest* and in *Dracula*. He regularly receives special invitations to observe the theatrical creations of actor, writer and leading stage director Robert Lepage in Québec, Canada.



**Hannah Chester** is beyond thrilled to be in her first show with Synetic Theater! She is a recent graduate from the University of Mary Washington with her BAs in Theatre and Communications & Digital Studies. Her recent credits include *Cashmere* in *The Emperor's New Clothes* at the Virginia Repertory Theatre. Hannah would like to thank her friends, loved ones, dogs, and cat for all of their love and support!



## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

### **Paata Tsikurishvili** (FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR)

A native of the Republic of Georgia, Paata is an innovative, award-winning international artistic director, director, and educator with more than 30 years of experience fusing the classical elements of drama, movement, dance, pantomime, and music. Since Synetic Theater's founding in 2001, Mr. Tsikurishvili has received an impressive 25 Helen Hayes Award Nominations and has won the awards 9-times. Together with his wife and co-founder Irina, he was named "Washingtonian of the Year" in 2013. Mr. Tsikurishvili has directed and performed in *Hamlet ... the rest is silence*, *The Master and Margarita*, *The Crackpots*, *Dracula*, *Host & Guest*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. He has directed over 60 productions including *Salomé*, *Bohemians*, *Jason and the Argonauts*, *The Dybbuk*, *Faust*, *Frankenstein*, *Macbeth*, *Animal Farm*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Carmen*, *Dante*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Othello*, *King Arthur*, *King Lear*, *Don Quixote*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, and *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Synetic's inaugural production, *Hamlet ... the rest is silence* received 3 Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Director, Outstanding Resident Play, and Outstanding Choreography. As an educator, Mr. Tsikurishvili has trained hundreds of actors in movement techniques through Synetic Theater and has taught at leading universities such as American University, Catholic University of America, and Georgetown University. Before moving to the USA he co-founded Mimodrama Theater in Germany and has toured worldwide. Paata holds an M.F.A. in film directing from Tbilisi State University and a B.F.A. in acting from The State Institute of Theater and Film in Tbilisi, Georgia.

**Irina Tsikurishvili** (DIRECTOR, CHOREOGRAPHER, FOUNDING ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR) A native of the Republic of Georgia, Ms. Tsikurishvili is a 58-time Helen Hayes Award Nominee and has won the award 14 times for her outstanding choreography and acting. Irina has choreographed all Synetic Theater's productions including *The Crackpots*, *Dracula*, *Host & Guest*, *Frankenstein*, *Island of Doctor Moreau*, *Salomé*, *Bohemians*, *Jason and the Argonauts*, *The Dybbuk*, *Faust*, *Frankenstein*, *Macbeth*, *Animal Farm*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Carmen*, *Dante*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Othello*, *King Arthur*, *King Lear*, *Don Quixote*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Three Musketeers*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, and many more. Ms. Tsikurishvili has taught at Georgetown University, where she choreographed *Lysistrata*. She continues to run intensive movement workshops and train Synetic cast members. With her husband Paata, she is the co-founder of Synetic Theater and co-founder of Stanislavsky Theater Studio. Paata & Irina were named Washingtonians of the Year in 2013. Irina graduated from Chabukiani National Ballet Academy in Tbilisi Georgia and holds BFA in Performing Arts.

**Vato Tsikurishvili** (FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER) has most recently been seen as Cyrano in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Truffaldino in *The Servant of Two Masters*. Some prior roles include Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Dante in *Dante's Inferno*, Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Roderigo in *Othello*, Lancelot in *King Arthur* and Caliban in *Tempest* among others. 2017 marks a decade of training, performing and teaching at Synetic. As a teaching artist at Synetic he has traveled throughout Maryland, DC, and Virginia, performing in outreach shows and leading workshops to thousands of students a year. He is also trained in gymnastics by his Grandfather; retired Coach of The Ohio State Buckeyes Mens Gymnastics team and former coach of the USA and USSR men's gymnastics teams, Arnold Kvetenadze. He is also a former fencer having trained under 3 time Saber gold medalist and coach of the Ohio State Buckeyes, Vladimir Nazlymov, for 5 years. Vato has also received training in fight choreography from Ben Cunis, and is currently the fight choreographer at Synetic. Some credits include *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Dante's Inferno* and *Man in the Iron Mask*.

**Nathan Weinberger** (RESIDENT DRAMATURG/ADAPTOR) is a founding company member of Synetic Theater, having started with the company in 2001. He has been resident dramaturg since 2005 and has adapted many of Synetic's most successful productions, including *Dracula*, *Faust*, *Animal Farm*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Trial*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, as well as *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Richard III* for Synetic's wordless Shakespeare series. His adaptations of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Sleepy Hollow* each received a Helen Hayes Award nomination for Outstanding Resident Play or Musical Adaptation.

**Koki Lortkipanidze** (RESIDENT COMPOSER) is a native of Tbilisi, Georgia, and has composed original music for 14 Synetic Productions and has received 5 Helen Hayes nominations for his sound designs and received 1 award. He has also composed original music for films including *First Steps*, *Essay* (both directed by Paata Tsikurishvili), and *Marage*. His compositions for theater include work for *Hunter from the Sun*, *Guest of the Night*, *Mimikria*, *Labyrinth*, and *The Decameron*. His work has been performed at music festivals across Europe, including the Maqs Ophulos festival in Germany and the International Gaudeamus Music Week in Amsterdam. Mr. Lortkipanidze received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Tbilisi State Conservatory.

**Phil Charlwood** (SCENIC DESIGNER/TECHNICAL DIRECTOR) has been building sets and props for Synetic Theater for over a decade. He has designed the Helen Hayes Award-nominated sets for *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and *King Lear* and designed the sets for RMT's *West Side Story* and AMS's *The Producers*. Mr. Charlwood also works with local schools to develop their technical drama programs.

**Evgenia L Salazar** (COSTUME DESIGNER) A native of Moscow, Evgenia Luzhina received a B.A. in Fine Art and Design from Moscow Art College, and went on to serve for five years as the Resident Set and Costume Designer for the Moscow Chamber Forms Theater. There, she designed numerous productions, which were staged in Moscow, Los Angeles and Washington DC. In 1991 Ms. Luzhina moved to the USA where she continues to pursue and exhibit her extensive experience in art and theatrical set and costumes design. Ms. Luzhina was Maryland Fashion Awards 2012 – Winner High Fashion Designer. She also received the Helen Hayes Award 2010: Outstanding Production for Youth – Winner, and National Silver Archer Award in Public Relations 2014- Winner. As a costume designer for the last 30 years, Evgenia Luzhina has worked for numerous theaters in Russia and the USA, creating costumes for over 50 plays. Ms. Luzhina has participated in many prestigious fashion events including Couture Fashion Week New York, and Washington DC's Presidential Inauguration Fashion Shows. Her designs have won critical acclaim in both local and national publications, on radio and television, newspapers and magazines in United States and Europe.

**Alexa Cassandra Duimstra** (ASSOCIATE COSTUME DESIGNER) is a DC area costume designer and illustrator. Previous work includes, *The Madness of Poe* and *Snow Queen* at Synetic, *La Valentina* at Gala, *Sometimes the Rain*, *Sometimes the Sea* at Rorschach, *The Cake* at Prologue, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Little Women* at NextStop, *Birds of a Feather* and *Jingle Journey* at Arts on the Horizon. You can see more of her work at alexaduumstra.com

**Dominic DeSalvio** (LIGHTING DESIGNER) is a lighting designer for theatre, dance, opera, and architecture. Previously at Synetic: *Servant of Two Masters*; *Phantom of the Opera*; *Sleepy Hollow*; *Cyrano*; *Richard III*; *Mark of Cain*; *The Trial* (Helen Hayes nomination); *Titus Andronicus* (Helen Hayes winner); *Sleeping Beauty*; *Taming of the Shrew* 2017; *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; *As You Like It*.

**Hailey LaRoe** (LIGHTING DESIGNER) is excited to be back at Synetic assisting on this haunting new work! Hailey is a Lighting Designer and Projection Designer, based in the DC area since 2018. Her recent Lighting credits include; *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and *Bloom* (Synetic theatre), *The 39 Steps* (NextStop Theatre), *The Tempest* (Classic theatre of Maryland), *Hurricane Diane*, & *Julius Cesar* (Avant Bard), *Principe y Principe* (Gala Theatre). Her recent projection design credits include; *Bathing in Moonlight*, and *Kumanana* (Gala Theatre), *Monsters of the American Cinema* (Prologue Theatre), *Sometimes the Rain*, *Sometimes the Sea* (Rorschach Theatre). Enjoy the show! Haileylaroedesigns.com.

**Brandon Cook** (SOUND ENGINEER) a local Washington DC Sound Designer, is excited to be working again with Synetic Theater. He is thankful for the amazing opportunity to work with the wonderful and talented cast and crew of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. (Recent credits include: *Seussical The Musical* Keegan Theatre 2023 *This Girl Laughs*, *This Girl Cries*, *This Girl Does Nothing*. Theatre Alliance 2023, *Lifespan Of A Fact* Keegan Theatre 2023, *La Revoltosa* Gala Theatre 2022, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Hedda Gabler* Shakespeare Theatre Company ACA Rep 2022.)

**Finlay Kuester** (STAGE MANAGER) is an Oregon-based stage manager. Recent credits: *Rent*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Once on This Island*, *King John*, *It's Christmas, Carol!* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Words From a Cuban Father*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *After Hours*, *The Sandalwood Box* (Oregon Center for the Arts); *Limetown* (Oregon Fringe Festival). Education: BFA in Theatre, Southern Oregon University.

**Mark Carmouze** (PRODUCTION MANAGER) Born and raised in Miami, FL to Cuban parents, Mark has been a theatrical professional for the past 2 decades. Mark attended college at Florida school of the arts and Greensboro College earning a bachelor's in Directing/Stage Management. One of his first roles was at nearby Olney Theater, but most of his career has been based in New York City. He has previously worked at The Manhattan Theatre Club, The Public Theater; Playwright's Horizons; Signature Theater; The McKittrick Hotel; and most recently Roundhouse Theater. In 2020, he began directing and producing virtual theatre under his company No Small Part. His aspirations are to help lead and inspire a future generation of theater audiences and professionals. He is thrilled to be part of the Synetic family!

**Ben Cunis** (MANAGING DIRECTOR) Artist, filmmaker, teacher and arts administrator Ben Cunis first joined Synetic Theater in 2006 as a recent alumnus from the Drama program at the Catholic University of America. He started training under Paata and Irina Tsikurishvili and in 2007 performed as Macduff in *Macbeth*. He spent ten years, all told, at Synetic Theater working as an actor, fight choreographer, teacher, Director of Development, Artistic Associate, director, and writer. He has received three Helen Hayes Awards for his work as a fight and action choreographer, along with additional awards as a part of the ensembles of *Twelfth Night*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Hamlet... The Rest is Silence*. From 2012-2017, Ben worked as the Development Associate for Hope Connections for Cancer Support in Bethesda, Maryland. In 2016, he moved to Los Angeles where he pursued his MFA in Film and TV production at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts, where he produced, directed, performed and stunt coordinated on many films. Several of Mr. Cunis' films are heavily influenced by his time at Synetic and have seen festival runs, including the Telluride Horror Show, the Golden State Film Festival, the Macabre Faire Festival, the Knoxville Horror Show, the Jack Oakie Comedy Festival, and the Artemis Women in Action Festival. Upon graduation, Ben was hired to teach directing at USC and was soon promoted to Lead Faculty on the foundational graduate course, Production I. He also co-founded the Virginia-based production company, Granite Kiss Creative, and worked with Lunacy Productions' Stu Pollard to create Trunacy, a non-profit dedicated to helping local indie filmmakers in Kentucky and the Midwest. Originally from Plymouth, New Hampshire, Ben lives with his wife, Betsy Summers, who he met while she was stage managing at Synetic on Lilia Slavova's *Nutcracker*. They have two children and two cats.

# SYNETIC THEATER

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*These donor levels span the period of 12/04/2022-12/04/2023.  
If you see any corrections, please contact*

***[emily@synetictheater.org](mailto:emily@synetictheater.org)***

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**Angelozi (Angels)**

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**Platina (Platinum)**

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**Okro (Gold)**

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Margaret Gaffen	Sharon Rennert
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	Peter Threadgill

### ვერცხლი

**Vertskli (Silver)**

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### ბრინჯაო

**Brinjao (Bronze)**

**\$100 - \$249**

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Jerome Andersen	Bob Lyness
Adele Baker	Carol Mates
Katherine Barnes	Barbara McBride
Roy Berkowitz	Bruce McFarland
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Val Golovskoy	David Siegel
Gary Gortenburg	Natalia Simakova
Lorna Grenadier	Arlene Sirkin
Martha Griesheimer	Corinne Smith
Douglas Hale	Hossein Sorurie
Richard Haynes	Lynn Soukup
Perpetua Heggi	Anna Szmajda
Madeline Helbraun	Sivakumar Tadikonda
Valeska M Hilbig	Jessica Tava
Barbara Hoffheins	Rose Thun
Thomas Holzman	Ida Tobe
Angela Hughes	Paul Traunero
Samuel Jackson	Cori Uccello
Bary Johnson	Nina Weissberg
Jane Jorgensen	Sandra Wheeler
Olga Kaganova	Francis Wilcox
Deborah Kirkman	Marilynn Wilson
Robert Lawrence	Joel Wind
Debra Levay	Sam Wyman
Josephine Liu	