



**SEASON 22**



**JULY 1-19  
2026**

**VAL UNDERWOOD**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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## MAHALO TO OUR SPONSORS



PIANO P LANE™



# from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

Dreams begin with imagination, but they endure because of community.

As we welcome you to Season 22 of Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, I find myself reflecting not only on the performances you will experience this summer, but on the extraordinary collective spirit that makes them possible. Every rehearsal, every lesson, and every artistic breakthrough is rooted in a shared belief that the performing arts have the power to inspire, connect, and transform.

This year's theme, *A Season of Dreams*, celebrates the courage to create, to imagine boldly, and to pursue artistry with purpose. It honors the young singer arriving in Hawai'i for the very first time, the faculty artist returning to mentor the next generation, the audience member discovering a new work, and the countless supporters whose generosity sustains this Festival year after year.

Our 2026 season brings together beloved masterworks, innovative new voices, and a vibrant international community of artists. From the soaring beauty of *Carousel* to the wit and heart of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and the groundbreaking *A.E. Reverie & Rise* by Composer-in-Residence Kamala Sankaram., this summer reflects the breadth of storytelling that defines HPAF. Across rehearsal rooms, studios, and performance venues around the island, artists from around the world will gather here to learn, collaborate, and dream together.

What moves me most about HPAF is not simply the caliber of artistry, but the humanity behind it. In a world that often feels increasingly disconnected, live performance reminds us to listen deeply, remain curious, and care for one another. The relationships formed here frequently last a lifetime, and the impact of this work extends far beyond the final curtain. I know this personally. My own journey with HPAF began as a participant in 2009, and that experience profoundly shaped the artist, educator, and leader I would become. What I discovered here was far more than a summer festival; it was a community grounded in mentorship, collaboration, creativity, and genuine human connection. Seventeen years later, I remain deeply grateful for the relationships and opportunities that began on this island and continue to shape my life and work today.

On behalf of our entire team, mahalo for being part of this journey. Whether you are joining us for a single performance or an entire season, your presence matters deeply. Thank you for believing in the arts, in young artists, and in the enduring magic of shared creative experiences.

With heartfelt aloha and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin John Moniz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Dr. Justin John Moniz  
Executive Director  
Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival

## ABOUT HAWAII PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL

Now in its 22nd season, Hawaii Performing Arts Festival (HPAF) continues to bring some of the world's most talented emerging musicians and performing artists to Hawai'i Island each summer for intensive training and performance opportunities. Participants representing the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, South America, and beyond study and perform alongside internationally recognized faculty artists in an environment rooted in collaboration, mentorship, and artistic excellence. The result is a transformative experience that continues to shape the next generation of performers, educators, and arts leaders.

The 2026 Summer Festival, *A Season of Dreams*, features a dynamic lineup of opera, musical theatre, chamber music, cabaret, jazz, community engagement events, and educational programming presented across Hawai'i Island. Mainstage productions include Kamala Sankaram's *A.E. Reverie* and *Rise*, Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Carousel*, and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, all presented with the HPAF Orchestra. Additional programming includes masterclasses, artist showcases, vocal recitals, community concerts, and special events designed to foster artistic growth and meaningful cultural exchange.

As HPAF looks toward the future, the Festival remains deeply committed to nurturing emerging artists while enriching the cultural life of Hawai'i Island through world-class performance, education, and community connection.

### MISSION STATEMENT

HPAF is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the appreciation and advancement of classical music and musical theater, to offer a world-class music training and performance program in the inspirational setting of Hawaii, and to improve the education and elevate the spirit of all who participate, especially the local community.



# SUPPORT THE ARTS

Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival has recently revamped its giving programs so that donors can not only feel part of a dedicated family of supporters, but can come closer to the world-class music they help to create!

**We invite you to join  
our loyal Ohana of  
HPAF supporters today.**

**MAKE A GIFT**

Give the gift of music and *dream big* with us  
this summer in paradise.

# Mahalo



HPAF would not be possible without the continued support, loyalty, and enthusiasm of so many sponsors, partners, and volunteers. This season, we are especially grateful for the overwhelming support of our beloved Ohana.

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## **HPAF MEMBER (\$1,500-\$4,999)**

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Jan Gilman  
Michele Greenfield  
Genette Freeman  
Dr. Justin John Moniz  
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Scott & Rachel Skiba  
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(in honor of Valerie & Ron Rosenfeld's  
birthdays)  
Val Underwood  
Lisa Wells  
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W A Shimabukuro & M S Simpson  
Tina L. Stuart  
Niel Thomas & Hermine Baker  
Val Underwood  
Bailey Wharton  
Jan Wizinowich  
John and Margo Wray

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Olivia Ebrahimi, Lead  
Georjean Adams  
Vivienne Aronowitz  
Lisa Chu-Thielbar  
Joanie Collins  
Virginia Fortner  
Eileen Hartwings  
Everett Knowles  
Kathy Kurpita  
Corinne Latham  
Rona Lee  
Bonnie Stevenson  
Irma Singer  
Michael Thompson  
Lisa Wells

*All gifts received prior to June 1 in support of our 2026 Festival have been acknowledged above. Gifts received following this date will be recognized via the HPAF website.*

# HAWAIIAN CULTURAL INITIATIVE

HPAF is proud to continue its Hawaiian Cultural Initiative for the fifth year, offering a series of classes designed to deepen the connection and understanding of Hawai'i's rich heritage among faculty, staff, and students. Guided by local experts, this year's curriculum features traditional kukui and lā'i lei making, Hawaiian history, language lessons, and hula instruction. Through this initiative, we strive to foster a stronger sense of community and cultivate a meaningful appreciation for the native land and its people.

*Top: Hawane Rios (HPAF Alumna) and headliner during The Spirit of Hawai'i (2022).  
Bottom: Michaela Lehuanani Larson.*



## EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

HPAF's commitment to music education extends far beyond the training of our participants. Our "Behind the Curtain Series" invites audience members to join pre-performance discussions before *A.E. Reverie & Rise*, *Carousel*, and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. These sessions provide a unique opportunity for the community to engage with HPAF artists on the thematic material and the creative process behind bringing an artistic vision to the stage.

Additionally, we are pleased to welcome underserved youth, along with up to two parents or guardians, to attend the final dress rehearsals of *A.E. Reverie & Rise*, *Carousel*, and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. For more information or to participate in this special experience, please email [assistants@hawaiipaf.org](mailto:assistants@hawaiipaf.org).



# CALENDAR of EVENTS

## Festival Opener: I Love A Piano

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1 7:00 PM

Blue Dragon Tavern  
& Cosmic Musiquarium

HPAF opens its season with a vibrant cabaret-style evening featuring NYC pianist and festival favorite Phil Kadet. With virtuosic playing, engaging storytelling, and infectious energy, Kadet celebrates the songs and spirit of American popular music under the stars.

**\$80 — General Admission**

## Christmas in July

THURSDAY, JULY 2 7:00pm

Davies Chapel at HPA

HPAF Developing Singers and Encrantz Fellows present an evening of holiday favorites that capture the warmth, wonder, and joy of the season. A festive program blending summer aloha with a touch of holiday sparkle.

**\$35 — General Admission**

## Behind the Curtain

FRIDAY, JULY 3 6:00pm

SUNDAY, JULY 5 2:00pm

Kahilu Theatre

Join Composer-in-Residence Kamala Sankaram for an engaging pre-show conversation exploring the creation of *Rise* and *A.E. Reverie*—from historical inspiration to musical language—and the process of bringing new opera to life.

**Free — General Admission**

## A.E. Reverie & Rise

FRIDAY, JULY 3 7:00pm

SUNDAY, JULY 5 3:00pm

Kahilu Theatre

DOUBLE  
BILL

*A.E. Reverie* unfolds on the night Amelia Earhart lands in Chautauqua in 1929, inspiring a young woman to imagine a future beyond imposed limits. Paired with *Rise*, this double bill blends history and magical realism to explore legacy, equality, and representation. Accompanied by the HPAF Orchestra.

**\$40, \$50, \$60 — Reserved Seating**

## Great Performances

SUNDAY, JULY 5 7:00pm

Davies Chapel at HPA

An intimate evening of chamber music featuring HPAF Faculty and Guest Artists. Experience the nuance, collaboration, and expressive power of masterworks performed up close.

**\$35 — General Admission**

## Broadway Bound

THURSDAY, JULY 9 7:00pm

Davies Chapel at HPA

HPAF Developing Singers and Encrantz Fellows take center stage in a program that celebrates the journey of becoming—the ambition, vulnerability, and joy that define the path to performance.

**\$35 — General Admission**

## Dueling Divas

FRIDAY, JULY 10 7:00pm

Davies Chapel at HPA

HPAF's leading ladies take the spotlight in an evening of fiery arias and virtuosic showpieces. From bel canto brilliance to verismo intensity, this high-energy concert showcases opera at its most thrilling.

**\$35 — General Admission**

## Behind the Curtain

SATURDAY, JULY 11 &  
SUNDAY, JULY 12 2:00pm  
Kahilu Theatre

Go behind the scenes with the creative team of *Carousel* in this engaging pre-show conversation exploring the artistic choices that bring this beloved classic to life for today's audiences..

**Free — General Admission**

## Carousel

SATURDAY, JULY 11 &  
SUNDAY, JULY 12 3:00pm  
Kahilu Theatre

A cornerstone of American musical theatre, *Carousel* follows Billy Bigelow and Julie Jordan—two passionate, imperfect lovers whose choices resonate beyond a single lifetime. Featuring one of Broadway's most luminous scores. Accompanied by the HPAF Orchestra.

**\$40, \$50, \$60 — Reserved Seating**

## Ohana Singer Spotlight

THURSDAY, JULY 16 12:00pm  
Davies Chapel at HPA

Featuring singers of all ages and backgrounds, this special event celebrates the artistry, growth, and community at the heart of HPAF. A joyful tribute to dedication and discovery.

**Pay What You Can — General Admission**

## High School Singer Vocal Showcase

FRIDAY, JULY 17 7:00pm  
Davies Chapel at HPA

The next generation of artists takes the stage in a fully staged performance highlighting the talent, growth, and dedication of HPAF's High School Singer Program.

**Pay What You Can — General Admission**

## Behind the Curtain

SATURDAY, JULY 18 &  
SUNDAY, JULY 19 2:00pm  
Kahilu Theatre

Join the creative team of *Spelling Bee* for a lively pre-show conversation exploring improvisation, audience participation, and the craft behind this uniquely theatrical experience.

**Free — General Admission**

## The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

SATURDAY, JULY 18 &  
SUNDAY, JULY 19 3:00pm  
Kahilu Theatre

Full of quirky charm and unexpected heart, *Spelling Bee* follows six competitors—and a few brave audience volunteers—as they navigate the joys and challenges of growing up. A witty and heartfelt celebration of identity, resilience, and connection. Accompanied by the HPAF Pep Band.

**\$40, \$50, \$60 — Reserved Seating**



P ANOPLANET



The 2026 Summer Festival is generously sponsored by Margareta & Staffan Encrantz (Platinum Sponsor), Mauna Kea Beach Hotel – Autograph Collection (Platinum Sponsor), Carol & Clive Davies (Silver Sponsor), Michael Thompson (Bronze Sponsor), Jim Monk (Bronze Sponsor), W A Shimabukuro & M S Simpson (Bronze Sponsor), and many others.

# The **HPAF** Legacy

**F**or the past 22 years, Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival has continued to provide world-class training and performance opportunities to aspiring young artists, both from Hawai'i Island and worldwide.

**Following their time at HPAF,** our esteemed alumni have gone on to grace some of the world's greatest stages, most notably The Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, English National Opera, Royal Opera House, Florida Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and have appeared in film and television, on Broadway, National Tours, and regionally.



# ADMINISTRATION



## **JUSTIN JOHN MONIZ**

**Executive Director | Music Director/Conductor, Carousel | Co-Chair, The Encrantz Professional Fellowship Program**

Dr. Justin John Moniz is an internationally recognized arts leader, educator, scholar, and performer who has been a member of the HPAF team since 2015. Since assuming the role of Executive Director in 2017, he has led HPAF through significant artistic and institutional growth, expanding the Festival's national profile while

deepening its impact throughout Hawai'i Island. Today, HPAF welcomes emerging artists from around the world and presents world-class performances, educational workshops, and master classes that have reached more than 80,000 audience members and participants since the organization's founding in 2005. In recognition of his leadership and contributions to the performing arts, Dr. Moniz was named one of Hawaii's Most Admired Leaders by Pacific Business News, received the Yamaha Corporation Top 40 Under 40 Music Educator Award, and was recognized as a Top Professional of the Year by Musical America. Dr. Moniz also serves as Associate Director of Vocal Performance and Coordinator of Vocal Pedagogy at New York University's Steinhardt School and as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Singing*. In 2025, he was named the Ellen Faull Master Teacher by the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), one of the profession's highest honors. [justinjohnmoniz.com](http://justinjohnmoniz.com) / @jj\_moniz



## **VAL UNDERWOOD**

**Co-Founder/Artistic Director | Co-Chair, The Encrantz Professional Fellowship Program | Vocal and Collaborative Piano Faculty**

Val Underwood is Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. He balances a distinguished career as both a voice teacher and pianist, whose playing the *Los Angeles Times* praised as "exquisite." He regularly teaches in Los Angeles, New York, and London, successfully training concert pianists

and internationally recognized vocalists. His foundational teachers included Arminda Canteros, a protégé of Vincenzo Scaramuzza, as well as Reginald Stewart, Dora Zaslavsky, Martial Singher, and Ernest St. John Metz. Underwood served as a studio accompanist for legendary artists including Lotte Lehmann, George London, Rose Bampton, and Martial Singher, and has collaborated with principal players from the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics. He has performed with an array of internationally acclaimed artists, including Mitchell Lurie, Eudice Shapiro, Glenn Dicterow, Ofra Harnoy, Gary Gray, Jeannine Altmeyer, Jennifer McGregor, and Ricky Ian Gordon. His screen credits include the masterpiece production of *The Song of the Lark*. After serving as Executive Director of the Malibu Strawberry Creek Music Festival and Vocal Director of the Adriatic Chamber Music Festival, Underwood co-founded HPAF with Genette Freeman.

# ADMINISTRATION



**GENETTE FREEMAN**  
Co-Founder | Executive Director Emerita

Genette Freeman was born and raised in Greeley, Colorado, where she met Val Underwood in seventh grade. She attended the University of Colorado Boulder and spent six years as the lead singer of a rock-and-roll band before beginning a successful twenty-year career as an award-winning Directory Advertising Consultant for Dex Media. Just two weeks after retiring, Freeman co-founded Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival with Underwood and served as Executive Director for fifteen years, helping build the organization into a thriving international training and performance program. After taking several years away for health reasons, she is delighted to once again support the HPAF staff and community in a variety of capacities. She is married to Eric Hammersmark, and together they have four grandchildren.



**SCOTT SKIBA**  
Assistant Artistic Director | Stage Director,  
*A.E. Reverie/Rise* | Co-Director, High School  
Singer Program

Stage Director, Producer, Administrator, and Educator, Scott Skiba has led more than 120 productions. Recognized for his imaginative stage direction and dynamic physical approach to storytelling, his work has received awards from the National Opera Association (NOA), The American Prize, and Opera America, and received critical acclaim as “masterful, ingenious, first-rate, vivid, and emotionally charged” in productions with Indianapolis Opera, Mobile Opera, Opera Grand Rapids, Helena Symphony Orchestra, Pensacola Opera, Amelia Island Opera, Opera Tampa, Toledo Opera, The Curtis Institute, Oberlin Conservatory, Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, and The Interlochen Center for The Arts. Skiba serves as Executive Artistic Director of Cleveland Opera Theater, General Director of Opera Western Reserve, and Artistic Advisor for Amelia Island Opera. A champion of interdisciplinary collaborations and new opera, Scott launched Cleveland Opera Theater’s (NOW) Fest, serves on the Chamber Opera Composition Committee for the NOA, and he has collaborated on the development and premiere of more than 18 new operas. An advocate for arts education, Skiba serves as Theater Instructor/Stage Director for the Washington National Opera Institute, Acting Instructor for Jennifer Rowley’s Boot Camp, and Assistant Artistic Director - Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. Skiba is represented by Marvel Arts Management. [www.ScottSkiba.com](http://www.ScottSkiba.com)

# ADMINISTRATION



## **RACHEL E. COPELAND** General Manager | Chair, Vocal Faculty

Rachel E. Copeland continues to receive acclaim as a “revelation with her coloratura soprano leaping easily to impossible heights!” She is a sought-after artist combining her crystalline voice with her compelling and energetic stage presence. Career highlights include the Queen of the Night in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* with Apollo’s Fire, Adina in Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore* in Cortona, Italy, Contessa in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Cleveland Opera

Theater, Frasquita in Bizet’s *Carmen* with San Diego Opera, Micaela in Peter Brook’s *Le tragédie de Carmen* with Indianapolis Opera, Woglinde in Wagner’s *Das Rheingold* with North Carolina Opera, and over 20 performances of Musetta from Puccini’s *La bohème*. Dr. Copeland began an appointment at Penn State School of Music as a member of the Voice Department in Fall, 2018, and now also serves as the Associate Director, Director of Graduate Programs. Administratively, Dr. Copeland serves as General Manager for the *Hawaii Performing Arts Festival* and has previously served in the positions of Program Director (2017) as well as the Operations Manager (2011 – 2016) for *Oberlin in Italy* in Arezzo, Italy. Copeland holds the Doctor of Music degree in Vocal Performance with a minor in Music History from Indiana University, the Master of Music degree in Voice Performance, and the Bachelor of Music Education degree in Choral Conducting from Baylor University.



## **SHAYNA LEAHY** Artistic Administrator

Shayna Leahy currently serves as the Artistic Administrator for HPAF after spending two summers as the Director of Production. As an operatic stage director, she has helmed productions of *Roméo et Juliette*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for New York City Opera in Bryant Park. She has also been a staple with Wichita Grand Opera, having previously directed productions of *Carmen*, *Madama*

*Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *Otello*, *Il Trovatore*, and *Aida* for them. Her productions are hailed as being “deeply felt, and deeply moving” with emphasis on “fine acting as well as strong singing” (Wichita Eagle). She served as Assistant Director of Martina Arroyo’s Prelude to Performance Program in New York, was faculty for the Opera Academy of the Midwest, and is currently the Director of Vocal Studies at Highland Community College, where she has led a nationally-recognized opera education initiative in collaboration with Wichita Grand Opera. Her productions at HCC have been Region V finalists in KCACTF, and she received the Region V KCACTF Outstanding Music Director award for her work on *Rent*. In addition, she has coached and music directed multiple students who have received national KCACTF awards for Distinguished Performance in a Musical.

# ADMINISTRATION



**IRMA SINGER**  
Director of Finance

Irma Singer is a native of California, originally hailing from Culver City in Los Angeles County, where she began her career as a bookkeeper working for an independent jewelry manufacturer. In 1985, Irma relocated to Santa Barbara, CA, where she continued her bookkeeping occupation working for a developer of AI programming languages. Irma progressed into providing personalized bookkeeping for private individuals, as well as maintaining a full-time position as Accounting Manager at a Four Diamond hotel in Santa Barbara, where she has been employed for the last 29 years. Irma joined the Board of Directors of Hawaii Performing Arts Festival as a Treasurer. She continues to provide support to HPAF as it begins its 22nd season.



**CIARA EMILY NEWMAN**  
Assistant General Manager | Co-Director, High School Singer Program

Ciara Emily Newman is a soprano from Fairbanks, Alaska. She serves as the Assistant General Manager for the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival under the direction of Dr. Rachel Copeland. Ciara holds a Master's degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from Penn State University as well as a Bachelor's in Vocal Performance from Baldwin Wallace University. Ciara's voice has been described as a sunny soprano while remaining agile and dramatic. Her command of the stage has lead her to many interesting projects including a live radio broadcast of Menotti's *The Old Maid* and *the Thief* with Penn State Opera Theater. Ciara was seen in the world premier of Griffin Candey's *The House of Bernarda Alba* as Magdalena in May of 2022 with Cleveland Opera Theater. She has also performed in the Midwest premier of Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied* as Older Alyce Thompson. Her credits as a voice teacher and administrator include work with Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music, Kent State University, Penn State University, Aurora School of Music, Akron Music Institute, Lakewood Music Academy, Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, and Hawaii Performing Arts Festival.

# ADMINISTRATION



## **IRENE CABÁN-BONET** Artistic Administration Intern

Irene I. Cabán Bonet is a second-year Master of Arts Management student at Carnegie Mellon University, Heinz College. Her Bachelor's degree is from the University of Puerto Rico, where she majored in Foreign Languages with a minor in Business Communication. She most recently worked with the Children's Literature Association's annual conference as an Operations and Communications Intern. In addition to working with the Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival as an Artistic Administration Intern this summer, she will also be working as a volunteer for the Museum of Art of Puerto Rico, under the Special Events Department. She hopes to use the knowledge gathered from these experiences to pursue a career in event management for non-profit arts organizations, helping them curate mission-aligned initiatives that cement the institutions' cultural and social importance in their communities. Apart from being committed to the arts, Irene likes to spend her free time hiking, practicing yoga and pilates, and rewatching early 2000s movies and shows.



## **REN ROTANTE** Artistic Administration Intern

Ren Rotante is excited to be spending her first summer at the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival! Ren has worked in arts administration as the Development Associate for Alaska Theatre of Youth (Anchorage, Alaska), and as the Artistic Director of Bridges Theatre Company, a student produced theatre at the Pittsburgh Playhouse. Outside of admin, Ren is a director/choreographer working internationally in musical theatre and devised plays. Their work centers around uplifting the beauty of humanity through movement driven storytelling. Ren has collaborated with companies across the United States and internationally, including Bavaria Performing Arts (DEU), Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre (AUS), Perseverance Theatre (Alaska), and the Pittsburgh Playhouse. Ren received their BFA in Directing from Point Park University and was a SDC National Directing Finalist at the 2025 American College Theatre Festival. <https://www.renrotante.com/> instagram: @ren.rotante.

# FACULTY ARTISTS



## **DANIEL BELCHER** Vocal Faculty

GRAMMY® Award-winning baritone Daniel Belcher has performed in many of the world's music capitals, including Paris, London, New York, San Francisco, Berlin, Amsterdam, Geneva, Madrid, Toronto, Montreal, Tokyo, Seoul and Houston. With a repertoire of over 100 roles, Belcher has championed roles from the Baroque to those composed expressly for him. He received his GRAMMY Award in 2011 for the role of Jaufré

Rudel in Kaija Saariaho and Amin Malouf's *L'Amour de Loin* under the baton of Kent Nagano on the Harmonia Mundi Label. World premieres include *Angels in America* at Paris's Théâtre du Châtelet, *Elizabeth Cree* at Opera Philadelphia, *The House without a Christmas Tree* at Houston Grand Opera, *Little Women* at Houston Grand Opera, *Waiting for Miss Monroe* at the The Netherlands Opera/Holland Festival, *The Scarlet Letter* at Opera Colorado and multiple others. Upcoming engagements include a return to The Metropolitan Opera for *Silent Night*, as well as debuts with Nashville Opera and Music of Remembrance (*The Dialogue of Memories* by Tom Cipullo). Future commissions and premieres include works by Lori Laitman, Tom Cipullo and Laura Kaminsky. He currently teaches voice at the Moores School of Music – University of Houston, along with his wife, stage director Kathleen Belcher.



## **KATHLEEN SMITH BELCHER** Stage Director, *Carousel*

Stage director Kathleen Smith Belcher is currently engaged as a member of the directing staff at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City and is the Artistic Director of the Moores Opera Center at the University of Houston. Among others, she has worked extensively with the San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and the Los Angeles Opera. Belcher has directed at La Scala (Milan, Italy) Teatro

Real (Madrid, Spain), The Spoleto Festival (Italy) and has assisted at English National Opera (London), the Royal Opera House (London), and the Bayrische Staatsoper (Münich, Germany). Belcher has been a frequent participant in the Met Live in HD worldwide broadcasts including for the Emmy award winning production of *Don Pasquale* and the GRAMMY™ winning *Porgy and Bess*. Recent engagements include directing the revival of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Metropolitan Opera, directing, *Les pêcheurs de perles* for Palm Beach Opera, and directing the world premiere of Tom Cipullo's *Hobson's Choice* for UH. Belcher has previously taught at the University of Michigan, William Jewell College, Florida State University, The University of Kansas, the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, and CoOperative at Rider University.

# FACULTY ARTISTS



## **WILLIAM NIELD CHRISTENSEN** Vocal Faculty

Dr. William Nield Christensen has been a member of the voice faculty at Oklahoma City University since August of 2004. His voice students have achieved significant levels of success in both musical theater and operatic genres. Dr. Christensen's students have sung on the stages of Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper Berlin, Oper Leipzig, Opernhaus Zürich,

Opéra National de Montpellier, Wexford Festival Opera, The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Glimmerglass Opera Festival, Lyric Opera Kansas City, San Diego Opera, Tulsa Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Sarasota Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Des Moines Opera, Opera Santa Barbara and Virginia Opera. Dr. Christensen's musical theater students have been seen in the national tours of: *Les Misérables: the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Ghost: The Musical-1<sup>st</sup> National Tour*, *Book of Mormon*, *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, and *Rock of Ages* and on the stages of Lincoln Center, Majestic Theater NYC, New Amsterdam Theater NYC, Imperial Theater NYC, American Airlines Theater NYC, Barrow Street Theater NYC, New York Musical Festival, Music Theater Wichita, La Jolla Playhouse, Paper Mill Playhouse, Casa Mañana, Fireside Theater, Pittsburgh CLO, Westchester Broadway Theatre, and Lyric Theater Oklahoma.



## **PAUL FLOYD** Music Director/Conductor, *A.E. Reverie/Rise* | Chair, Collaborative Piano Program | Vocal Coaching Faculty

Pianist Paul Floyd works as a collaborative artist, vocal coach and conductor. He has taught on the music faculties of Chapman University and the University of California, Los Angeles. For sixteen years he served as an Assistant Conductor with the Los Angeles Opera and was regularly featured as a lecturer at pre-performance talks. During the summers he has

coached or conducted at the Santa Fe Opera, Aspen Music Festival, Hawaii Performing Arts Festival and the Astoria Festival in Oregon. Paul frequently appeared as the official accompanist for the Western Region Finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. His movie credits include an appearance with Julie Andrews and Anna Netrebko in *Princess Diaries II*, and a Disney Hall performance with Vivica Genaux in Anthony Hopkins' *Fracture*. He is currently working as principal coach of the Resident Artist program and assistant conductor for the Portland Opera. Paul holds a doctoral degree in piano performance from the University of Colorado, Boulder, in addition to degrees from the Eastman School of Music and the University of Southern California, where he graduated summa cum laude.

# FACULTY ARTISTS



## **ERRIK HOOD**

**Stage Director, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Errik M. Hood, DMA, PAVA-Recognized Vocologist, is a stage director, educator, and performer who is thrilled to return to the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. Serving as Director of Vocal Performance at NYU Steinhardt, his directing work spans musical theater and opera in both university and professional regional theater settings. Recent productions include *RENT*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Songs for a New World*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. His work has received awards recognizing excellence in both live and virtual university theater direction. Hood has a particular interest in performance-making in nontraditional venues and collaborative spaces, as well as actor-singer-driven storytelling. Also an active performer, he has appeared with opera companies and as a soloist with orchestras throughout the United States and abroad, including performances at Carnegie Hall and Ely Cathedral as part of the Great Britain Choral Festival. In addition to his directing and performing work, Hood presents nationally and internationally on vocal pedagogy, motor learning theory-informed practice strategies, and cross-disciplinary approaches to performer development and vocal well-being.



## **PHIL KADET**

**Featured Performer, *I Love a Piano* | Music Director/  
Pianist, High School Singer Program**

Phil Kadet is a pianist, singer, and music director, working in many styles of music, from rock to jazz to classical. He is a regular solo entertainer, maintaining weekly residencies in New York and is also the keyboardist for the rock band Escaper. He is a regular collaborative pianist, music director and guest artist with the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival in Waimea, HI. He is a staff pianist and music director at NYU Steinhardt. While chiefly a keyboardist, he also enjoys playing guitar and cycling, at the same time.

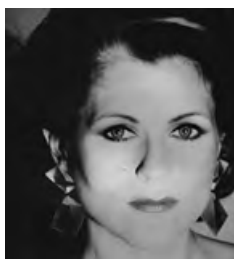
# FACULTY ARTISTS



## **RONALD LAND**

**Music Director/Conductor/Pianist, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* | Vocal Coaching Faculty**

Ronald Land is a Professor of Voice at Rider University and LIU-Post, where he maintains private voice studios. He has served as a member of the collaborative piano staff at Manhattan School of Music and on the faculty at Queens College as a music director of Opera Studio. He was formerly the Co-Head of Musical Theatre at Five Towns College, where, in addition to private voice lessons and classes in preparation for a career in musical theatre, he served as musical and/or stage director for 11 productions. Born and raised in Scranton, PA, Ron attended the University of Hartford, the University of the Arts, and Temple University. His students sing in opera houses all over the world, and in musical theatre productions on Broadway, National and International tours, and regional productions throughout the US. This is his first time in Hawaii, and he is thrilled to be joining the Artistic Staff of the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival.



## **JENNIFER MCGREGOR**

**Vocal Faculty**

Jennifer McGregor is one of Australia's most important sopranos. Conductor Brian Castles-Onion noted, "The brilliant Australian soprano Jennifer McGregor was a fine coloratura with a perfect trill, charming and a wonderful actor. These combined to make her an audience favorite for two decades with Opera Australia." Before opera, she spent three years in Musical Theater, starring in *The Sound of Music*, *Cabaret*, and *Candide*. Her performance as Ophelia in *Hamlet* opposite Sherrill Milnes skyrocketed her career. Other notable roles included Musetta in *La Bohème*, Sofie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus* alongside Dame Joan Sutherland, and The Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, which she performed over 100 times. Her vast repertoire also featured *Massenet's Manon*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and the title role in *Lulu*. McGregor was the first Lucia at the Sydney Opera House following Dame Joan Sutherland, leading critics to dub her the "New Sutherland." Her extensive career additionally included acclaimed performances as Violetta in *La Traviata*, Gilda, Cleopatra, and the title role in *Die Lustige Witwe*, alongside numerous guest appearances with various Australian Symphonies.

# FACULTY ARTISTS



## **MAIKA'I NASH** Vocal Coaching Faculty

Kanaka Maoli pianist, Maika'i Nash, returned home in 2017 after 20 years abroad. Originally working in design and marketing, he returned to music, studying at McGill as a vocal coach. He continued advanced studies in Austria, Italy, and France, while maintaining a studio of vocalists in Montréal. Toronto was next and Maika'i worked with theatres throughout Canada while coaching at U of Toronto, Glenn Gould School, Western University, and the Royal Conservatory. He was an official pianist for the Metropolitan Opera, co-founded Opera5, a boutique opera company and started to work in radio and music direction. Bogotá became home for 3 years before accepting an offer from Hawaii Opera Theatre as Head of Music and Director of the Orvis Opera Studio. Maika'i began exploring other parts of the industry and has worked with the Hawaii Symphony, Diamond Head Theatre, Manoa Valley Theatre, Kahilu Theatre, KHPR, among others. He is on faculty at the HPAF and HiPA festivals on Hawaii island, and taught at UH Manoa, Punahou, Iolani and Hawai'i Preparatory Academy. Until recently, Maika'i was the official pianist for Disney Entertainment within the State, and founded Piko Arts, a performing arts company that produced 11 performances before the pandemic. New performances forthcoming.



## **KAMALA SANKARAM** Composer-in-Residence | Composer, *A.E. Reverie/Rise*

Praised as “strikingly original” (NY Times), Kamala Sankaram moves freely between the worlds of experimental music, sound installation, and contemporary opera. Known for pushing the boundaries of form and style, she has created work for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, an opera for the trees of Prospect Park, a techno-noir featuring live datamining of the audience and a chorus of 25 singing tablet computers, and the world's first virtual reality opera, among other pieces. She has been commissioned by the Minnesota Opera, the Glimmerglass Festival, Washington National Opera, and Houston Grand Opera, among others. As a biracial Indian-American and trained sitarist, Kamala has drawn on Indian classical music in many of her works, including *Thumbprint*, *A Rose*, *Monkey* and *Francine in the City of Tigers*, and the *Jungle Book*. Also an educator and writer, Kamala has been a featured speaker at TEDx Riverdale Country Day, has contributed critical essays on opera for Routledge and Opera America magazine, and has been a frequent panelist at conferences and organizations including AWE, The Nature of Cities, and CTHQ, among others. Dr. Sankaram holds a PhD from the New School and is currently a member of the composition faculty at the Mannes College of Music. In addition to her work as a composer and performer, Kamala is an active member of her larger musical community. Whether as a producer, educator, mentor, or Opera America committee member, she enjoys contributing to the broader musical landscape and shaping projects and musical experiments.

# FACULTY ARTISTS



## **PAULINA VILLARREAL** Vocal Faculty

Mezzo-soprano Paulina Villarreal is assistant professor of music in voice at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. A recipient of the Yamaha Corporation Excellence in Music Education Award, she maintains an international career as a performer, educator, and advocate for Latin American and Iberian vocal music.

Before joining Indiana University, Villarreal served on the faculty of the University of Memphis and previously held appointments at Centenary College of Louisiana and Millikin University. She continues on faculty at the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival and is founder and artistic director of the Cantos para el Mundo concert series in Mexico. She earned her doctorate from the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music. As a performer, Villarreal has appeared with Opera Saratoga, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Fusion: New Works, the Tanglewood Music Center, Boston Pops, Cincinnati Symphony, Princeton Symphony, and Opera Memphis. Her repertoire spans opera, musical theater, and commercial music, reflecting a broad artistic range. An active clinician, lecturer, and researcher, Villarreal has presented for NATS, the National Opera Association, College Music Society, and institutions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Her students regularly earn roles and placements in leading Young Artist programs and competitions in the United States and abroad.

# PRODUCTION TEAM



## **BRITTANY BLASCHKE** Projection Designer

Brittany Powell Blaschke is an award-winning projection designer working in theatre, opera and dance throughout the country. Previous opera productions include *Barber of Seville* (Helena Symphony), *Alcina* (Cleveland Institute of Music), *Carmen* (Opera Western Reserve), *Our Town* (Georgia State University), *La Bohème* (Columbus Symphony, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and Cleveland Opera Theatre), *Come Home Gala* (The Washington National Opera), *The Light In The Piazza* (Columbus State University), *Alcina*, *Glory Denied* and *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Baldwin Wallace Conservatory and Penn State), *Into the Woods* and *Alcina* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival), Verdi's *Macbeth* (Opera Tampa), and *Tosca* (Opera Grand Rapids). Brittany received her Masters of Arts in Digital Arts and Sciences from the University of Florida.



## **THERRIN J. EBER** Lighting Designer

Therrin J. Eber is a Birmingham, Alabama based Lighting and Scenic Designer, Assistant Professor and the Head of Design and Technology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Department of Theatre. Therrin holds an M.F.A. in theatre from the University of Alabama and a B.A from Purdue Fort Wayne. Some of his favorite past work from around the country include: *Machinal* (off-B'Way), *Madama Butterfly*, *Pagliacci*, *Barber of Seville* (Opera Louisiana) *Ragtime*, *Anything Goes*, *Anastasia* (Theatre Tuscaloosa) *Anne Frank*, *Hansel and Gretel* (Opera Birmingham) *Sweeney Todd*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *Little Women* (UA), *God of Carnage*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Rainbow Fish*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, and *Freaky Friday* (UAB) and Bernstein's *Mass* (Brevard Music Center.) Therrin has also been a lighting designer for concerts and events such as: The Temptations, The Four Tops, Lyle Lovett, The Manhattan Transfer, NPR's The Moth Radio Hour, among others. When not working he loves spending time in the kitchen making extravagant meals with his wife Sara, his doodles *Oliver Twist* and *Liza Minelli*, and his cat - Bob Fosse. (None of the animals do the cooking, though they have aspirations). See his work at [www.therrinjeber.com](http://www.therrinjeber.com)

# PRODUCTION TEAM



## **LEE JASON FRIEND** Costume Designer

Lee Jason Friend currently teaches Costume Design at Parker School, where he works with students to bring characters to life through creativity, craftsmanship, and storytelling. His journey in theater began at age 14 as an intern at the famed Music Circus in Sacramento, where he learned from industry professionals and gained the hands-on experience that would shape his career.

Because he was given those opportunities at such a young age,

Lee considers it both an honor and a responsibility to mentor and teach students. Lee has worked on more than 200 productions, including the National Tours of *Les Misérables*, *Ragtime*, and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, as well as productions of *Chess*, *Evita*, *Carousel*, *Dreamgirls*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *The Who's Tommy*. Closer to home, Hawai'i Island audiences may recognize Lee's costume work from local productions of *Beauty and the Beast* and *Into the Woods*. This past year, his Parker School costume students designed and built the costumes for *Willy Wonka*, and he is excited to continue that creative journey with upcoming productions of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Frozen*. Lee is also an artist and designer. In 2024, one of his original art designs was selected by HGTV to represent Hawai'i in *The Pioneer Woman Magazine* Christmas issue. He also creates jewelry and artwork featured in galleries and shops in Hawai'i and California. Lee is grateful for the support of his students, family, friends, and the theater community.



## **KYRA MESSINETTI** Choreographer, *Carousel*

Kyra Messinetti is a performer, choreographer, and teaching artist with more than 30 years of experience. Born in New York and raised in a performing arts family, she later moved to Florida, where she attended the Pinellas County Center for the Arts, studying Musical Theatre. After returning to New York to attend the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts, Kyra built a successful career as an actor and model, appearing in commercials, television, and film,

and working internationally for eight years. She relocated to Los Angeles, where she continued working in entertainment while also directing and choreographing for The Los Angeles Academy of Performing Arts. In 2020, Kyra moved to Hawai'i Island and discovered a passion for sharing her love of theatre with the keiki in her community. As an educator, she encourages students to find their voice, build confidence, and let their creativity take center stage. Since then, Kyra has taught and choreographed throughout the Hawai'i Island community. Most recently, she appeared as Inga in *Young Frankenstein* with Waimea Community Theatre. She is faculty at Prince Dance Institute, where she teaches tap, jazz, ballet, and musical theatre. Kyra is honored to join HPAF as choreographer for *Carousel* and is grateful for the opportunity to help bring this beloved Rodgers and Hammerstein classic to life.

# PRODUCTION TEAM



**ROBERT PIERCE**  
Production Stage Manager

Robert Pierce is a Cleveland-based journeyman of the arts, specializing in the production and performance of opera and musical theater. Behind the scenes, Robert is a prolific stage manager among northeast Ohio opera companies and music schools, most notably working on the world premieres of Griffin Candey & Caridad Svich's *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory and Matthew Recio & Royce Vavrek's *The Puppy Episode* at Oberlin Conservatory, as well as acclaimed productions with Cleveland Opera Theater and Opera Western Reserve. He has also enjoyed traveling to stage manage *The Barber of Seville* with the Helena Symphony, *Hansel and Gretel* with Kentucky Opera, and Jake Heggie's *Two Remain* with Lyric Opera of Orange County, in addition to the past four summers here at HPAF. On stage, he has performed many featured roles in regional theater and opera, with some favorite titles being *The Little Mermaid*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Billy Elliot*, *Violet*, *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *Street Scene*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*. A graduate of Otterbein University and Cleveland Institute of Music, Robert also previously spent a decade directing and performing operatic programming for young audiences as Educational Outreach Director for Opera Western Reserve.



**MOLLY CHUN**  
Production Intern | Stage Manager, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Chinese American soprano Molly Chun is a fourth-year undergraduate Voice Performance Major at Oberlin Conservatory. She currently studies under the instruction of Mathilda Edge. As a Kentucky native, Ms. Chun is a graduate of the distinguished Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts. Ms. Chun's passion for music goes far beyond performance. She also works behind the scenes as a Stage Manager for Oberlin Conservatory Production. Her 2025-2026 season engagements include Opera Scheduler at Prague Summer Nights: Young Artist Music Festival 2025 in Tábor and Vienna, Assistant Stage Director of *L'amant anonyme* at Oberlin Opera Theater, *Valentina* in *Later the Same Evening*, and Eustacia in *Bastianello*, and Assistant Stage Manager at Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. Ms. Chun will attend Eastman School of Music in the fall to further her graduate studies under the tutelage of Kathryn Cowdrick.

# PRODUCTION TEAM



## **AVA PAUL**

**Production Intern | Stage Manager, A.E. Reverie/Rise**

Ava Paul is a spring 2026 graduate of the five-year Double Degree Program at Oberlin College and Conservatory, where she earned degrees in Voice Performance and Politics, with a minor in Law and Society. She combines these fields through her work in arts administration and advocacy within the classical voice world and has collaborated with professional choirs, opera companies, and philanthropic organizations.

As an inaugural member of the Denyce Graves Foundation Shared Voices Program, Paul is deeply committed to championing and premiering works by underrepresented composers. She has performed and spoken about her dedication to equity in the vocal arts at Howard University, Peabody Conservatory, and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. As a young soprano, Paul's recent roles include Drusilla in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* here at Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, La Fée in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Serpetta in Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* with Oberlin Opera Theatre, and Amina in Bellini's *La sonnambula* with the Mediterranean Opera Studio. Next season, she will perform the role of Despina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the Yale School of Music, where she will be pursuing her master's degree in opera.

**SATURDAY  
JULY 11**

**SUNDAY,  
JULY 12**

**3:00pm**

**Kahilu Theatre**



# ORCHESTRA



## **SHARON CANNON**

**Percussion, *A.E. Reverie/Rise, Carousel, and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Philadelphia born and raised, Sharon came from a family of entertainers. She has a Music Performance Degree in Percussion from Temple University, studying with principal percussionists from the Philadelphia Orchestra, Pennsylvania Ballet and the Philly Pops.

In 1989 Sharon moved to Hawaii due to health issues, where she has since made her home for the last 35+ years. Sharon is the principal percussionist with the Kamuela Philharmonic Orchestra, Kona Choral Society, the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival and the West Hawaii County Band. Sharon also played with the Aloha Performing Arts Company for over 25 years. Sharon shares her talent teaching students of all ages. Sharon served as an Officer on the Kamuela Philharmonic board. She leads the thriving KPOS Music Education program since 2016. Sharon enjoys being in the sun and ocean, great entertainment, living in Hawaii, solving crossword puzzles and watching the beautiful Kona sunsets with her loving partner. Sharon's mission in life is to preserve the integrity and experience of live music. She is happiest when sharing music and is eternally grateful to be blessed in being a part of the magic that music has in bringing people together.



## **MARIO O. FLORES**

**Flute/Oboe, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Mario O. Flores is a distinguished performing arts educator and conductor with over 30 years of experience. Originally from Los Angeles and now based in Kamuela, he serves as the Upper School Arts Department Chair and Director of Music at Hawai'i Preparatory Academy (HPA). Mario's career spans leadership roles at institutions across the East and West Coasts, including the Hun School of Princeton, Williston-Northampton School, and Webb Schools of California. He also served as Director of Orchestras for *Play On, Philly!*, an El Sistema-inspired program serving youth in Philadelphia. After a five-year hiatus due to injury, Mario returned to the stage in 2022 and now performs with choral groups and musical theatre ensembles across Hawai'i Island. He holds a B.A. with Honors from Brown University, an M.A. in Music Education from Columbia University, and a conducting fellowship from Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music.

# ORCHESTRA



## **AMANDA FRIEDMAN** **Horn, *Carousel***

Born in Jacksonville, Florida, Amanda is now a North Carolina based musician. After obtaining her Bachelor's degree from Eastman School of Music, she moved to Winston Salem where she got her Masters degree in Horn Performance from UNCSA. Amanda is now the adjunct instructor of Horn at Catawba College. She is the co-principal horn of the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, and regularly subs with Charlotte Symphony.

Throughout her career so far, she has collaborated with notable professionals such as Peter Kurau, James Thompson, Wayne Bergeron, and Øystein Baadsvik.



## **JASON GAMER** **Trumpet, *Carousel***

Jason Gamer (B.Mus. Curtis Institute of Music; M.Mus, DMA, USC Thornton School of Music) is a music director, trumpet player, and educator. Gamer has performed in ensembles including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestra Santa Monica, Moshav, Distant Cousins, Kammersinfonie Bremen, the legendary punk rock band Violent Femmes, and on recordings and soundtracks for television and film. Formerly an assistant professor at Utah State University and a lecturer

at California State University Dominguez Hills, he is currently the music director at Vistamar School. His original music was featured in *The Redeem Team* which won a Sports Emmy Award for Outstanding Long Documentary in 2023. His compositions and improvisations appear on major streaming platforms. Gamer leads many ensembles and creative projects, including serving as a music director at Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. For 11 years, he was music director and conductor of the Wild Ginger Philharmonic, which he co-founded. Recently he served as music director for full-scale productions of *Chicago*, *Mamma Mia!*, the musical, *Dogfight*, *Fun Home*, *RENT*, and *Little Women*, the musical. He is a recipient of the Founder's Award for Humanity in the Arts from ICAP, the International Committee of Artists for Peace.

# ORCHESTRA



## **SAVANNAH HILTERBRANDT**

**Bass (Principal Professional Fellow), A.E. Reverie/Rise and Carousel**

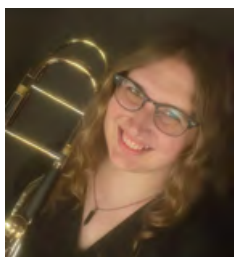
Savannah Hilterbrandt is a double bassist from Tampa, FL with a BM from the University of North Texas. She also previously studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, Ireland, where she was a recipient of the BlackWater Valley Opera festival bursary. She is currently pursuing a master's of music degree at the University of North Texas. Her recent performances have included substitute bass with the National Symphony of Ireland, and a solo recital at the BlackWater Valley Opera Festival in Waterford, Ireland. She has performed chamber works including the *Schulhoff Concertino* for bass, viola, and flute. She also performed the *Brahms sextet in B flat major* at the Wintergreen summer music festival, where she was a fellow. Savannah has worked as a chamber music coach at the Bradetich summer bass camps, and is currently involved in the Texas Independent School District teaching program. In the Dallas-Fort Worth area, she has performed with orchestras such as the McKinney Philharmonic, Dallas Millennial Choir and Orchestra, and the Sherman Symphony.



## **MATTHEW HUDGENS — Oboe/English Horn,** **A.E. Reverie/Rise and Carousel**

Matthew Hudgens, originally from Grand Junction, Colorado, is a historical winds specialist who has been hailed for his “sumptuous bravura descant arias” (San Diego Story 2024). A graduate of the Juilliard School and the University of North Texas, Matthew has performed with numerous period and modern groups throughout the United States, such as Portland Baroque, American Bach Soloists, Philharmonie Austin, Cantata Collective, Oregon Bach Festival, Chamber Music Northwest, California Bach, Lyra Baroque, Sonoma Bach, Seattle Bach Festival, the Oregon Symphony, and is a founding member of the Newfound Chamber Winds. His recording projects include: *Preludes and Recitations* (2020), *Kairos* (2024), and *Flutelore* (2025) with the Newfound Chamber Winds, in addition to recording Bach's St. Matthew Passion with Cantata Collective and Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony with Philharmonie Austin. Matthew has also collaborated with members of Les Arts Florissants in a music video production, performing bassist and composer Doug Balliett's *Ovid Cantatas*, produced by Quincy Jones (2021). When Matthew is not immersed in his musical pursuits, he finds solace in the natural beauty of his home in Portland, Oregon. He enjoys spending time outdoors, exploring the trails, and cherishing moments with family and friends.

# ORCHESTRA



## **OLIVIA JACKSON**

**Trombone (Professional Fellow), *A.E. Reverie/Rise***

Olivia Jackson is a trombonist from Rancho Cucamonga, California performing at HPAF as part of the double-bill production of *A. E. Reverie* and *Rise* by Kamala Sankaram. She is currently halfway through her Master's Degree in the Instrumental Arts Program at the Bard College Conservatory of Music in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, studying primarily with Metropolitan Opera principal trombonist Sasha Romero. Olivia

has performed with various distinguished groups, such as the Claremont Symphony Orchestra, Temecula Valley Symphony Orchestra, and Los Angeles Brass Alliance, as well as at various events such as the Rafael Mendez Brass Institute and Windy City Trombone Retreat. She previously earned her Bachelor's Degree in 2025 from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and her Associate's Degree in 2022 from Riverside City College. Her former primary teachers include Los Angeles professionals Dr. Lori Stuntz and Steve Suminski.



## **EDNA JEON**

**Flute, *A.E. Reverie/Rise* and *Carousel***

A believer in music's uniting powers, flutist Edna Jeon brings her creativity as a soloist, collaborator, and orchestral musician to all of her performances. She has been praised for her charming stage presence, impressive technique, and thoughtful approach to music in repertoire ranging from baroque to contemporary. Edna has held the acting piccolo/3rd flute position at the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and the

Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. She has been the piccolo fellow at the Aspen Music Festival for multiple summers, and has performed with other festivals including Eastern Music Festival, Festival Napa Valley, and the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. An avid soloist and chamber musician, Edna has been a guest artist and teacher at Nicholls State University and has performed both solo and chamber recitals throughout the United States. She received her M.M. at Carnegie Mellon University and her B.M. at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her teachers include Seattle Symphony's principal flutist Demarre McGill, former principal flutist of the St. Louis Symphony Mark Sparks, Aspen Music Festival's Nadine Asin, and Alberto Almarza at Carnegie Mellon University. Based in the California Bay Area, Edna enjoys reading and gardening in her spare time.

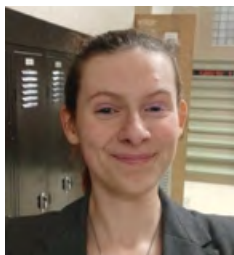
# ORCHESTRA



## **CARLA KOUNTOUPES**

**Concertmaster, *A.E. Reverie/Rise* and *Carousel***

Carla Kountoupes is a member of the Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra, Arizona Opera Orchestra, Santa Fe Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, and Piazzolla da Camera Piano Trio. Carla has toured and performed professionally with orchestras and chamber ensembles in Central America, Taiwan, Germany, and all over the United States, including as a member of the New Century Chamber Orchestra in San Francisco and the Costa Rican National Symphony Orchestra. She enjoys performing and recording many genres in addition to classical, including Latin/world, alt-rock/pop, and jazz. A dedicated music educator, Carla holds a Master of Music degree in Music Teaching. She has taught private violin lessons to children and adults for more than 30 years and is currently on faculty at the New Mexico School for the Arts in Santa Fe. Carla was awarded *Music Teacher of the Year* in 2016, by the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) of New Mexico, and received the Santa Fe Public Schools' 2017 *Teachers Who Inspire Award*. She is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory (Violin Performance) and Oberlin College (English Literature). Carla's violin was made in the 1740's and was inherited from her grandfather. [www.ckviolin.com](http://www.ckviolin.com)



## **KAELA LAWSON**

**Clarinet/Sax (Professional Fellow), *Carousel* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Kaela Lawson is a recent graduate of Youngstown State University, earning her Bachelor's Degree in K-12 Instrumental Music Education with an emphasis in clarinet. She has performed in multiple pit orchestras for musicals across Ohio and Pennsylvania such as *The Music Man*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Sound of Music*, *Singing in the Rain*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Newsies*, *Cinderella*, and *Oklahoma!* With her skills as a woodwind tripler, she hopes to continue on with performing in local musicals even through her teaching career. For her future, Kaela has been offered and accepted the position of Brookfield High School's Head Band Director in Brookfield, Ohio.

# ORCHESTRA



## **EDEN LIU**

**Viola (Professional Fellow), *A.E. Reverie/Rise* and *Carousel***

A returning Professional Fellow at the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Eden Liu is a violinist and violist currently double majoring in Public Health and Music Performance at the University of Washington. She performs throughout the Pacific Northwest as an active freelance musician in symphonic, chamber, and musical theater settings. Her recent work includes international performances in Italy and Portugal, where she received eight awards at the InterHarmony Music Festival and toured with the Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestra. A two-time concerto competition winner, Eden continues to balance her musical career with her studies in healthcare, drawing inspiration from the ways both fields connect people and communities.



## **ANNA MARSH**

**Orchestra Manager, Bassoon, *A.E. Reverie/Rise* and *Carousel***

Anna Marsh is a multi-instrumentalist fluent in Renaissance, Baroque, Classical and Modern styles. Originally from Tacoma, WA, Anna holds a doctorate of music in historical performance from Indiana University and masters in modern bassoon from USC. She has appeared worldwide with Opera Lafayette, Tempesta di Mare, Folger Consort, Musica Angelica, Tafelmusik, Washington Bach Consort and Atlanta Baroque among others. She has taught privately & at festivals at the Eastman School of Music, Los Angeles Music and Art School, Amherst Early Music, San Francisco Early Music Society & Western Double Reed Workshops. She also has been heard on dozens of recordings & on Performance Today, Harmonia, CBC radio & recorded for Chandos, Analekta, Centaur, Naxos, the Super Bowl, Avie, and Musica Omnia's Grammy nominated album, Handel's Israel in Egypt. [www.annamarshmusic.com](http://www.annamarshmusic.com)

# ORCHESTRA



## **KATIE RIETMAN**

**Principal Cello, *A.E. Reverie/Rise and Carousel***

Katie Rietman has performed as a cellist on over 60 CD recordings and numerous concerts and radio broadcasts with notable baroque, classical, and romantic period instrument ensembles worldwide. Her performing career has taken her to 21 countries in Europe, North America, and South America. She is a prizewinner in the Bonporti competition ( Rovereto, Italy) and a semi-finalist in the Van Wassenaer competition ( Den Haag, Netherlands.) Katie studied modern cello at the Cleveland Institute of Music and baroque cello at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam, and subsequently lived in Cologne, Germany for ten years, performing with countless European early music groups. Currently living in Santa Fe, Katie Rietman has been the principal cellist of many New York period instrument ensembles, including the Grammy-nominated Trinity Wall Street Baroque Orchestra, where she was continuo cellist for the complete cycle of the Bach Cantatas; the Clarion Society; and with the St. Thomas Boys' Choir. She plays with Atlanta Baroque, Spire (Kansas City) and the Dallas Bach Society. Katie is particularly known for her continuo playing and command of several languages, and her collaboration with singers in baroque opera, oratorio, and cantatas. Currently living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, she performs there with the Desert Chorale, the Santa Fe Symphony, Pro Musica, Opera West, and the new baroque concert series MarketMusic.



## **ROSS ROUSSEL**

**Trumpet, *Carousel***

Ross Roussel moved to Kailua Kona, Hawaii in early 2023, after having played trumpet in the Baton Rouge Jazz Ensemble for 10 years. Previously he played piano and trumpet in various church groups and ensembles across the mainland for over 30 years. Here in Kona, he has performed with the West Hawaii County Band, the Chamber Orchestra of Kona, the Kona Brass, and the Kamuela Philharmonic Orchestra. Most recently he played trumpet in the orchestra for the Aloha Theatre's 2026 production of the Broadway musical *Spamalot*.

# ORCHESTRA



## **NAOMI SCHRANK**

**Principal Second Violin (Principal Professional Fellow), *A.E. Reverie/Rise* and *Carousel***

Naomi Schrank is an alumna of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University (B.M.), McGill University (M.M.), and Northeastern Illinois University (M.Ed. in Violin Pedagogy). Based in Chicago, Naomi is a member of the Madison Symphony Orchestra and the Quad City Symphony Orchestra, and performs regularly with several other orchestras across

the country. She is also an alumna of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and the New World Symphony. Throughout her musical journey, she has worked closely with a wide range of esteemed artists, including Riccardo Muti, Marin Alsop, Simon Rattle, Leonard Slatkin, Ken-David Masur, Gerard Schwarz, Leon Fleisher, Yo-Yo Ma, Midori, Emanuel Ax, Gil Shaham, Augustin Hadelich, James Ehnes, and Joshua Bell. As an educator, Naomi is passionate about inspiring the next generation of musicians. She maintains a private studio at Barrington Music Academy and Suzuki School, serves as Senior Faculty at Northeastern Illinois University Community Music Program, and has appeared as a guest instructor with the Chicago Chamber Music Festival.



## **EVAN STEFANCIN**

**Percussion/Drum Set (Professional Fellow), *Carousel* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Evan Stefancin is a third-year percussion student from Poland, Ohio. He began playing drums at the age of six and he began studying with Matt Hayes at the age of 14. He is an active performer at Youngstown State University, where he plays with the Wind Ensemble, Jazz Combos, Jazz Ensembles, Percussion Ensemble, and Pep Band. Through these ensembles, he

has developed a versatile musical voice, performing repertoire that spans classical percussion, jazz, and contemporary styles. In addition to his work at the university, Evan performs regularly with the bands Nineteenth Paradise and Lovers in Reverse, exploring a wide range of genres including funk, fusion, and rock music. He is also an active freelance musician, collaborating with local artists and performing in a variety of settings throughout the region. Evan's musical interests center around drum set performance and improvisation. His studies and performance experiences continue to shape his approach as a performer, with a focus on musical expression, adaptability, and creative exploration.

# ORCHESTRA



## **KELLY STUART**

**Cello, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Kelly Stuart is a cellist based on the Big Island of Hawai'i. Their career has taken them around the world, performing for musical theatre, chamber ensembles, and as a solo artist. A founding member of the Elbe Ensemble (Dresden, Germany), Kelly was also the Artist-in-Residence for rural schools in South Monterey County, California, from 2014-2015. They have appeared in the Forest Hill Concert Series (San Francisco), the Berkeley Arts and Letters lecture series, and on Kahilu.tv as a featured soloist. Holding a Bachelor of Music from Boston University and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Southern Maine, they are the principal cellist of the Kamuela Philharmonic and perform with the string quartet 'Apapane Rising. They were also a nominee for the 2020 Pushcart Prize in Nonfiction. They have performed with the Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival since 2025.



## **LORI STUNTZ**

**Trombone, *Carousel***

Lori Stuntz is a freelance trombonist in the greater Los Angeles area. She has a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the USC Thornton School of Music. Lori plays principal trombone with the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony and trombone with the San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Stuntz is on the faculty at Cal Poly Pomona. Lori is the president of She Can Play Brass, a premier women's brass organization in Los Angeles. As a commercial player, Lori plays lead trombone for Maiden Voyage, 3<sup>rd</sup> with The Geoff Stradling Big Band, and has performed with DIVA, Nancy Wilson, Jack Sheldon, Ray Anthony, Lionel Hampton, Bill Watrous, and The New York Pops. As a recording artist she has appeared on many major motion picture soundtracks including Black Adam, Alice in Wonderland, Superman Returns, and X-men 3. She is the first female trombonist to record on a major motion picture soundtrack. Lori is proud to be a performing artist for Greenhoe Trombones.

# ORCHESTRA



## **SHARENE TABA**

**Harp, A.E. *Reverie/Rise* and *Carousel***

Sharene Taba has performed with the Honolulu and Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra as 2nd harp for 20 years with her first teacher, Constance Uejio, principal harp emeritus. Taba has many mentors, including Emmett Yoshioka and JoAnn Turovsky (Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Opera). On weekday afternoons, Sharene Taba celebrates music and musicians as the host of "Classical Pacific" on Hawai'i Public

Radio. She is married to jazz bassist and educator, Dean Taba and their goal in life is to share music, and be on Hawai'i Island as much as possible.



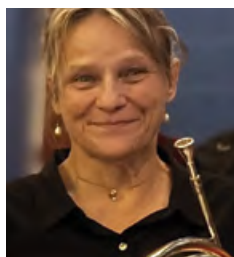
## **ALICE WANG**

**Clarinet, A.E. *Reverie/Rise***

Dr. Alice Wang is an active clinician, collaborator of chamber music, and an active orchestra player as the regular member of the Youngstown Symphony, Warren Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Opera Western Reserve Orchestra. Alice had performed in professional conferences such as the International Clarinet Association *ClarinetFest* and the Ohio Music Education Association Conference as a soloist and chamber musician.

Alice completed her Bachelor of Music in Performance at the University of Southern California under the tutelage of Mr. Yehuda Gilad and Mitchell Lurie. She later joined the studio of Sir Walter Boeykens of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp in Belgium where she received her masters. As part of the guest student artist program Alice had the opportunity to study with Hermann Stefansson of Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra in Sweden. Alice completed her Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of Texas at Austin under Prof. Richard MacDowell and joined the faculty of the Dana School of Music in the same year. Alice currently lives in Pittsburgh with her husband Kurt, and their occasionally ill-mannered dogs Wally and Linus, a flock of hens, and depending on the season a thriving or failing as a bee keeper.

# ORCHESTRA



## **COLLEEN WHITTY** **Horn, *Carousel***

Colleen moved to the Big Island from Chicago in 2017. While in Chicago, she performed with several orchestras for 15 years. Full time with the Lakeshore Symphony, Northwest Symphony, West Suburban Symphony and Wheaton Symphony Summer Orchestra. Since 2017 she has been employed with the Hawaii County Band, Kamuela Philharmonic and Principal Horn for the Maui Pops Orchestra. In 2019 she started the Kilauea Kwintet (brass) and performs regularly on Hawaii Island. In 2021, Colleen started the Big Island Horn Choir to further education of the Horn for adults and students. She has also been volunteering at Keaau High School working with horn students. Colleen studied with Mary Kihlslinger at the University of Toledo and Warren Gref at Brevard Music Festival. Colleen has been involved with the Master Gardener Program at UH Hilo since 2022 and has concentrated on growing food for sustainability.



## **KEIRA IDA AYU** **Percussion Assistant, *A.E. Reverie/Rise* and *Carousel***

Keira Ida Ayu is a rising senior at Waiākea High School and an active young musician, arts advocate, and emerging community leader on Hawai'i Island. She has studied piano since age four and currently plays percussion with the Hawai'i Youth Symphony (YSII), Orchid Isle Orchestra, Kamuela Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Waiākea High School Band program. She is looking forward to marching in the 2026 Macy's

Thanksgiving Parade with Hawai'i All State Marching Band. Beyond performance, Keira is passionate about the importance of creative arts education and the role music and the arts play in developing collaboration, empathy, discipline, and human connection. As technology and artificial intelligence continue to grow, she believes creativity, live performance, and authentic human expression are becoming even more important in shaping thoughtful and connected communities. Outside of music, Keira enjoys spending time at the beach, paddle boarding, and appreciating the natural beauty of Hawai'i. She loves animals of all kinds - from rescuing cockroaches to cuddling cows - and values kindness and curiosity toward both people and the natural world.

# GUEST ARTISTS



## **OCTAVIAN BOUCHER** **Featured Dancer, *Carousel***

Octavian has been dancing for the past four years with Prince Dance Institute. He loves aerial silks, contemporary and is beginning his journey with ballet this year. He loves to travel, cook, draw and play D&D. He has been homeschooled since he was six years old and will be graduating early.



## **MICHELLE SHANSHAN DING** **A Powerful Woman, *Rise***

Michelle ShanShan Ding is a classically trained concert pianist, soprano, and neoclassical composer based in Ann Arbor. She holds advanced degrees in piano performance and vocal arts from Michigan State University and University of Michigan and has performed internationally in opera, musical theater, and concert settings. Michelle returns for her fifth year as an alum guest artist with the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. Inspired by nature and social justice, she composes original music across genres. Her rap song *SIGN AAPS*, advocating for teachers working without contracts, was featured in the The Detroit News. She also enjoys creating online content as an amateur K-pop dancer.



## **HAINING REN** **Maria Hernández, *Rise***

Haining Ren is a full lyric soprano. Her musical journey began in Helsinki, where she first trained as a pianist, before transitioning to classical singing. Haining's stage experience spans various operatic roles, including Mimi in *La Bohème* with Landmark Opera. Laetitia in *The Old Maid and the Thief*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. She has also made her theatrical debut as Mrs. Webb in *Our Town* in Torrance, Los Angeles. Haining is thrilled to return to the Big Island this season.



## **AIZEN SALADINO** **Featured Dancer, *Carousel***

Aizen Saladino has trained in dance for four years with Prince Dance Institute and for one and a half years with Guiding Steps Hawai'i. He has been an active student leader at Kealakehe High School, where he founded and served as president of the Waverider Dance Club, established in 2025. Through leadership, choreography, and mentorship, he has helped create a space for students to grow in dance and performance. Aizen has also dedicated his time to serving his community through performances around the Big Island and helping bring youth involvement and performance to communities and school events.

# Encranitz PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS



## **AARON HUNGERFORD**

**Assistant Music Director/Collaborative Pianist,  
*Carousel***

Aaron Hungerford is excited to be learning as a Collaborative Piano Fellow with HPAF. He completed his undergraduate studies at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Aaron has served as music teacher and choral director at Ephrata Middle School, contemporary worship leader at Asbury UMC, and pianist for Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus. He has performed

both in the pit and onstage for many musicals and operas and most recently served as keyboardist/conductor for *Pippin* and *Spongebob* at York Suburban HS in York, PA.



## **YUMEKO STERN**

**Marcy Park/Choreographer, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Yumeko Stern recently received a BM in Vocal Performance with a concentration in musical theatre at NYU Steinhardt and studies with Justin John Moniz. She was most recently seen as Mouse (and others) in *A Year with Frog and Toad* at Playhouse on Park, Wanda in TheaterWorksUSA's national tour of *The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System* and as Carrie Pipperidge in

*Carousel* with Ohio Light Opera Company. Previous HPAF credits include *The Witch Into the Woods*, and Sheila Franklin *Hair*. Love and gratitude to the faculty, cast, and crew of HPAF.

A promotional graphic for the 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. The background is a dark teal color with a subtle, swirling pattern. On the left side, the dates and time are listed in white text: "SATURDAY, JULY 18", "SUNDAY, JULY 19", "3:00pm", and "Kahilu Theatre". On the right side, there is a large, stylized illustration of a red apple with a green leaf and a brown stem. The apple is surrounded by small yellow stars. The text "THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY Spelling Bee" is written in white and orange text over the apple illustration. The word "Spelling" is in a large, white, cursive font, and "Bee" is in a smaller, white, cursive font below it.

# Encranitz PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS



## **INDALECIO DE JESÚS VALENTÍN**

**Mitch Mahoney, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

A Milwaukee native praised for his “ringing tenor that climbs to the rafters”, “brooding heartthrob” Indalecio De Jesus Valentín is a versatile artist who values collaboration and honest story telling. Notable roles include Old Deuteronomy in Andrew Lloyd Weber’s CATS (North American/Broadway Tour) Tophér/Prince Charming in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella,

Man 1 in Jason Robert Brown’s Songs for a New World, and Aeneas in Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas. Other works include: In the Heights (Piraguero/Graffiti Pete U/S), Dogfight (Eddie Birdlace U/S), Elf the Musical (Buddy the Elf U/S), Damn Yankees (Smokey), RENT (Featured Soloist).



## **SYDNEY WANG**

**Assistant Music Director/Collaborative Pianist,  
*A.E. Reverie/Rise | Synthesizer, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Sydney Wang is a Los-Angeles based pianist and composer whose artistry draws upon her extensive experience as a collaborative performer. She has worked on numerous operas including *The Turn of the Screw* (Opera UCLA), *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera Lucca), *Don Giovanni* (Music On Site) and

*Iphigénie en Tauride* (Opera UCLA). An alumna of the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s Nancy and Barry Sanders Composer Fellowship Program, Wang’s compositions have been played by leading artists such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Pasadena Symphony, and Salastina. She is the recipient of a BMI Student Composer Award and a Marvin Hamlisch International Music Award.

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



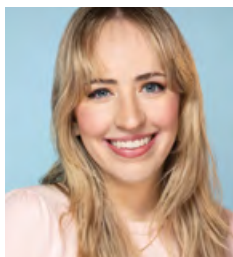
## **EVELYN ABRAHAM** **Monument, *Rise***

Soprano Evelyn Abraham graduated from Muhlenberg College with a BA in Music (Vocal Performance) and Theatre, and will begin her graduate study at Temple University this fall. She has performed as Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*), and more. Evelyn won Muhlenberg's Class of 1969 competition in 2026 and earned the Women's Auxiliary of Music Scholarship in 2025, both of which honor exceptional musical achievement. She has also explored choral music, jazz, Renaissance polyphony, musical theatre, and pop. Evelyn is passionate about expressive storytelling, and she looks forward to building a professional career in opera!



## **JULIANNA BANFE** **Carrie Pimperidge, *Carousel***

Mezzo-soprano Julianna Banfe is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Voice at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where she studies with Paulina Villarreal. She was most recently seen as Laurey in *Oklahoma!* with IU Opera Theater. Additional credits include Un Pâtre/Chorus in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (IU Opera Theater) and Celia in *Silla* (Chicago Summer Opera). Banfe has performed with the contemporary vocal ensemble NOTUS and is a proud alumna of the Philadelphia Girls Choir. In 2022, she made her Carnegie Hall debut with Music-Fest Rising Talents, performing in a vocal quartet.



## **KATIE BEYER** **Adelaide Johnson, *Rise***

Katie is thrilled to be making her Hawai'i performing debut with HPAF. She received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Colorado State University, where she appeared in productions such as *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Un pâtre/ Une autre bête), *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and *A Little Night Music* (Fredrika Armfeldt). Recent credits include StageDoor Theatre's *Sweeney Todd* in Conifer, CO and The Arts Hub's *Into the Woods* (Rapunzel) in Lafayette, Colorado. She will be pursuing her Masters in Music at New York University starting this fall.

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



## **ALEXANDRA BOBROW** Monument, *Rise*

American-Norwegian soprano Alexandra Bobrow began her musical path as a flautist at Berklee College of Music. She spent over a decade with Norway's Bergen Philharmonic Chorus, appearing on the Grammy-nominated recording of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, and collaborated frequently with Bergen National Opera, including in *The Magic Flute*. This past season, Alexandra sang with The Dessoff Choirs and Oratorio Society of New York, performing with Andrea Bocelli and Renée Fleming, with solo highlights including "Et in unum" from Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and "Agnus Dei" from Gounod's *St. Cecilia Mass*. She's delighted to make her role debut in Sankaram's *Rise*.



## **MEG BOOKER** Carrie Pimperidge, *Carousel*

Meg Booker is a graduate student at the University of Louisville studying Vocal Performance. She recently made her debut with the Kentucky Symphony Orchestra singing Micaëla in *Carmen*. Her other starring roles include Angelina in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* and Gasparina in Haydn's *La Canterina*. She has won prizes in multiple international competitions and her research exploring the effects of bodily hormones on the female voice won the inaugural UofL Research Award and was presented at the Voice Foundation Symposium in Philadelphia, PA. She currently serves as the music director at Mother of God Church in Covington, KY.



## **VICTORIA HELU CHEN** Marcy Park, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

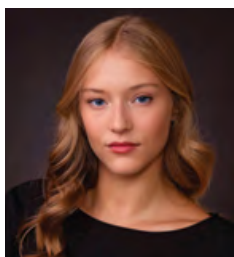
Victoria Helu Chen grew up in Beijing, Switzerland, and Singapore before moving to the U.S. for college. She is a graduate of AMDA and The New School. International credits include performances on CCTV and at the Musikverein, Vienna. Recent Off-Broadway: *Bloom: A Musical Myth* (Connelly Theater), *Microbes* (Marjorie S. Deane Little Theater). Off-Off Broadway: *Julie, Fluffy the Pine, Humanity Denied*. Other favorites: *Rent* (Mimi), *The Little Mermaid* (Ariel). As a producer, she has created concerts at 54 Below, including 54 Sings East Meets West and 54 Introduces: International Musical. @deervictoria\_

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



**KAYAZHANNA DONALDSON**  
Officer Victoria Wilson, *Rise*

KayaZhanna Donaldson is a Washington, D.C.-based vocalist, composer, and performer whose artistry spans classical, jazz, gospel, and musical theatre. A graduate of Howard University with a concentration in Jazz Voice, she also trained in classical vocal music at Duke Ellington School of the Arts. KayaZhanna has performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and with Howard University's premier vocal jazz ensemble, Afro Blue. In Fall 2026, she will pursue a Master of Music in Vocal Performance: Music Theatre at New York University Steinhardt, continuing her passion for storytelling through music across genres.



**SYLVIA GOODWIN**  
Adelaide Johnson, *Rise*

Sylvia Goodwin is very excited to be making her opera debut as Adelaide Johnson in Kamala Sankaram's *Rise!* Sylvia is from Indiana and is a rising junior vocal performance major at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. At IU, she has participated in multiple recitals and choir performances, including the Oratorio Chorus of Mahler Symphony No. II and Nathaniel Dett's *The Ordering of Moses*. Outside of classical singing, Sylvia has had roles in multiple community and regional theater musicals including, Alice in *The Addams Family*, Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn in *The Music Man*, and Pilar in *Legally Blonde*.



**AVA HAWKINS**  
Julie Jordan, *Carousel*

Ava Hawkins, soprano, is a versatile artist specializing in opera, theatre, and jazz. A native of Lake Orion, Michigan, she is a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at the University of Michigan, studying with Louise Toppin. Recent roles include Gianetta in *The Gondoliers* and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at Musica Nelle Marche in Urbino, Italy. At Michigan, she performed Donna Anna in opera scenes from *Don Giovanni* and appeared in multiple productions. A 2024 NATS Undergraduate Winner, she sings with the University of Michigan Chamber Choir and maintains an active career as a performer and teacher.

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



**JAMES LYNCH**  
*Enoch Snow, Carousel*

James Lynch is thrilled to be joining HPAF this summer! Most recently, he appeared as Adam Stanheight in both the National Tour and Off-Broadway productions of *Saw the Musical*. Previous credits include *Fifth Avenue* (Neal), *Illusion* (E.C.), and *Desperation* (Rudy). He would like to thank his family, friends, and his partner Kyle (go see him as Leaf HPAF's production of *Spelling Bee!*) for all of their endless support and encouragement. Many thanks to everyone who makes this festival possible!



**JOHANNA MAKELA**  
*A Powerful Woman, Rise*

Johanna Makela is a recently graduated vocal performance student from St. Olaf College. At college, she had the opportunity to participate in Viardot's *Cendrillon* and Herbert's *Babes in Toyland* with the Lyric Theater, as well as two student theater productions, once in the ensemble of *Big Fish the Musical* and this past fall as the choreographer for *Little Women*. She grew up around the twin cities, and is incredibly grateful for the opportunities to be in Hawaii this summer! After graduating from St. Olaf, she will be continuing her music education at New York University.



**LEAH MASCAREÑAS**  
*Olive Ostrovsky, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Leah Mascareñas is a performer from Albuquerque, New Mexico. She has spent the past three years studying at the University of New Mexico and graduated this past spring. She will continue her training at NYU Steinhardt this fall, where she will pursue an M.M. in Vocal Performance with a concentration in Music Theatre. She has been an avid participant in both community and collegiate theatre, with favorite shows including *Next to Normal* (UNM), *Into the Woods* (Tri-M), and *Little Women* (MTS). She is deeply grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival.

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



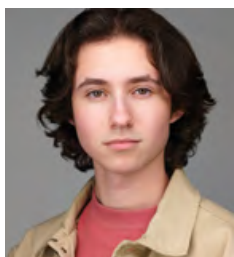
**KATHERINE MAYBA**  
Young Woman, *A.E. Reverie*

Katherine is hailed as a “multi-talented, charismatic [and] riveting” performer (Opera Canada). Notable roles include Halka (*Halka*), Pamina and Queen of the Night (*The Magic Flute*), Le Feu (*L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*), Lena (*Svadba*), Titania (*The Fairy Queen*), Amore (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*) and Ilia (*Idomeneo*). A multidisciplinary musician, Katherine obtained her Master of Music in Voice Performance at the University of Manitoba and holds her ARCT Performance Diploma in Voice, Piano and Violin from The Royal Conservatory of Music. Katherine is commencing her doctoral studies at McGill University, and looks forward to chamber music projects and researching Ukrainian Art Songs.



**DELANEY MCNALLY**  
Alicia Hernández, *Rise*

Delaney McNally is a soprano from Fort Wayne, Indiana, currently a sophomore studying Vocal Performance at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. At IU, Delaney has trained under Prof. Patricia Stiles and Dr. Paulina Villarreal. She has also performed in several studio recitals, mainstage concerts at the Mac, conductor-led ensembles, and the voice department's freshman and sophomore recitals. Every performance reminds her why she chose this path. It's truly something special to be able to make people feel emotion and bring stories to life onstage with the sole power of her voice.



**HENRY MORTON**  
Chip Tolentino/Vice Principal Panch, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Henry Morton (he/him) is pursuing his Masters of Music in Vocal Performance for Musical Theatre with a Certificate in Vocal Pedagogy at Arizona State University and received his Bachelor of Arts in Applied Voice at the University of Oregon's School of Music and Dance. Select credits: Ernst in *Spring Awakening*, Aaron Fox in *Curtains*, Swing in *Songs For A New World*, La Rainette in *L'Enfant est les Sortilèges* (Arizona State University); Henrik in *A Little Night Music* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival); Jack Kelly in *Newsies* and Georg Nowack in *She Loves Me* (Non-Stop Players). @henrymorton.mt

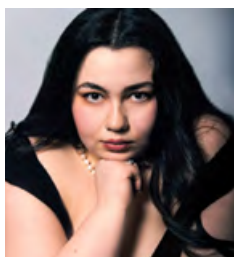
# DEVELOPING SINGERS



**JOHNNY MULCAHY**  
Billy Bigelow, *Carousel*

Johnny Mulcahy is an NYC-based baritone. He recently graduated from NYU Steinhardt with a Master's Degree in Music with a concentration in classical vocal performance. Recent credits include: Major General Stanley (*Pirates of Penzance*), Falke (*Die Fledermaus*), and Featured Ensemble (*Sweeney Todd*). He also performed the role of Leo in *Nancy Drew and the Mystery at Spotlight Manor*, a new musical composed by Alan

Menken and directed by James Lapine. At NYU, he also performed as Ozzie in the NYU Broadway Orchestra's concerted version of *On the Town*, conducted by Ted Sperling as well as Alcindoro in NYU's Opera Gala. [johnnymulcahy.com](http://johnnymulcahy.com)



**LOTTA MUSHKATBLAT**  
Nettie Fowler, *Carousel*

Lotta Mushkatblat, soprano, earned her Master's in Opera and Voice Performance from McGill University, where she studied with Dominique Labelle and performed the role of Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues des Carmélites*. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Texas Christian University, where she performed La Baronessa in *Il cappello di paglia di Firenze* and the Mother/Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*. She has worked with

coaches including Giovanni Reggioli, Patrick Hansen, and Barbara Frittoli, and received an Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, North Dakota–Manitoba District. This summer, she joins the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival as Nettie in *Carousel* and Bel Canto in Tuscany as Lucilla in *La scala di seta*.



**AXEL OBED NIEVES TORRES**  
William Barfee, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Axel Obed Nieves Torres is an actor and singer from Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. He plays William Barfee in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Axel completed his bachelor's degree in Drama with emphasis in acting from the University of Puerto Rico at the Río Piedras Campus. Furthermore, he is currently working on obtaining a master's in Vocal Performance

at NYU. He has been part of numerous productions including: *The Fantasticks*, "Marardiente", "Son de Reyes" and others, giving Axel the opportunity to participate in The Touring Theater at the University of PR and The Repertoire Theater at the UPR Theater.

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



## **NOELLE RAJ**

**Heavenly Friend/Carrie Pipheridge (understudy),  
*Carousel***

Noelle Raj is delighted to make their acting debut after 5+ years as a music educator and inclusive education support in South Jersey. Their current role is as a private voice and piano teacher, though their recent time on stage includes singing for a wedding mass. Their preparation at Ithaca College (B.M. Music Education) was the first spark for pursuing performance – in no small part thanks to their professors, Thomas Erik Angerhofer and Deborah Montgomery-Cove. Noelle is honored to be a part of HPAF and to learn through its esteemed tradition of artist education.



## **ALINA REITZ**

**Logainne Schwartzandgrubeniére, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Alina Reitz (Logainne SchwartzandGrubeniére) is thrilled to return to the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival stage for her third summer. A rising senior at NYU Steinhardt, she is pursuing a BM in Vocal Performance. Alina recently originated the role of Maggie in the workshop of *Rewind: A New Musical* and has expanded her artistic reach at NYU by assistant directing for the New Student Spotlight. Her previous HPAF credits include Aunt March in *Little Women* (2024) and Cinderella's Mother in *Into the Woods* (2023). She is incredibly grateful to the HPAF team for another summer of growth and music in paradise.



## **EVIE RYDEN**

**Louise Bigelow, *Carousel***

Evie Ryden is a senior Dance Pedagogy major at Oklahoma City University in the Ann Lacy School of Dance and Entertainment. During her time at OCU she has appeared in *MOVE!*, *Holiday Spectacular*, *On Our Way*, *We're Back Again*, and *Just Getting Started*. She is a member of the Star Dance Company and Rep Company. Evie will be a featured choreographer in the school's upcoming show, *On The Floor*. She is currently a voice student of Sarah Jo Martin and has previously trained with Julianne Best as well as Jeff and Jannifer Rice.

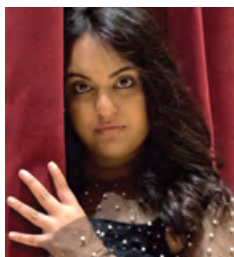
# DEVELOPING SINGERS



## **ANGELINA SALOTTO**

**Maria Hernández, *Rise***

Angelina Salotto, soprano, recently completed her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at Baldwin Wallace University. She has appeared in the Conservatory's productions of *The Merry Widow* (Praskovia), *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Dodo/Love Police), *The Pirates of Penzance*, and most recently as *Maria Hernández* in *Rise* by Kamala Sankaram. Her credits also include scenes as Despina in *Così fan tutte* and Clytemnestra in *La belle Hélène*, along with a performance in the Baldwin Wallace Oratorio Concert. Angelina is delighted to join the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival this summer and revisit *Rise* with the composer in residence.



## **ANTELLA LIBEE SARGIS**

**Principal/Nettie Fowler (understudy), *Carousel***

Antella Libee Sargis graduated from San Francisco State University with a Bachelor's of Music in Music Specialty Vocal Performance with a Minor in Theater (2026). During her last semester she got accepted into New York University Steinhardt for a Master's of Music Vocal Performance with Specialty in Musical Theater. She has been trained in different genres; 4 years of Opera (*Dido & Aeneas* 2022, etc), 1 year of AfroCuban (concerts 2024), 3 years of Jazz (concerts 2023 - 2026), 12 years of Choral (concerts & solos/duets 2014 - 2026), Musical Theater (2011 - present). Now she's the understudy for Nettie Fowler *Carousel* for HPAF.

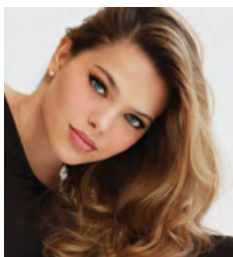


## **GRACE SCHEXNAYDER**

**Olive Ostrovsky, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Grace Schexnayder is a Vocal Performance major at the University of Houston. She has been described as someone who "[brings] life" to characters, and who is "brave to take on [certain roles]" (Conroe Today). She has "enchanted sold-out audiences" (Dock Line Magazine) in roles including Johanna in *Sweeney Todd*, Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, Sally in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, Janet in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, Sandy in *Grease*, and more! She is also excited for her MOC debut in this Fall's musical at UH. She thanks her family, friends, and boyfriend for their endless encouragement!

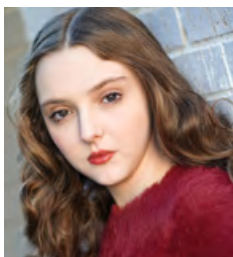
# DEVELOPING SINGERS



## **ELIZA SCHUMACHER**

**Rona Lisa Peretti, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

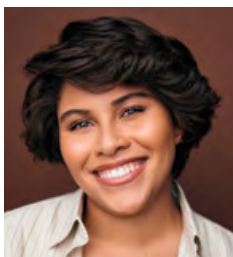
Eliza Schumacher graduated from Southern Methodist University this past May with a Bachelor of Music. Her degree was in vocal performance, and she also earned a minor in corporate communications & public affairs. This upcoming August, she'll be moving to New York, where she will attend New York University and earn her Master of Music in vocal performance with a specialization in musical theatre. Some recent roles Eliza has starred in have been Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* and Julie Jordan in *Carousel*. Eliza is so grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival this summer; she gives all glory to God and thanks her family for their support!



## **LAUREN SCOTT**

**Julie Jordan, *Carousel***

Lauren Scott is a junior Vocal Performance major with a Musical Theatre Concentration at NYU Steinhardt and has been in productions such as *Pirates of Penzance* (Mabel), *The Wizard of Oz* (Dorothy), *Sweeney Todd* (Swing), and *Die Fledermaus* (Ensemble/Adele u/s). Professionally Lauren has performed at Dallas Theatre Center (*The Happy Elf*) and Lyric Stage (*Quannah World Premiere*). Lauren is a member of Actors Equity Association and can next be seen in *She Loves Me* (Amalia) at NYU Steinhardt this fall.



## **SUKI SCOTT**

**Rona Lisa Peretti, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Suki Scott, a proud Bronx, New York native, has loved music and theater since childhood. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre from Rider University, where she developed her passion for storytelling, collaboration, and artistry. Her theater credits include *The Great Comet of 1812* (U/S Opera Singer, Ensemble), *Rent* (U/S Joanne, Mrs. Jefferson, Cop, Ensemble), and *Myths and Hymns* (Featured Soloist, Ensemble). Outside of performing, Suki enjoys hiking, baking, journaling, exploring New York City, and creating playlists. She is grateful to perform alongside such a talented cast and thanks her parents and girlfriend for their unwavering support.

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



## **SOLOMON SHUMATE** **Jigger Cragin, *Carousel***

Solomon Shumate, born and raised on Hawai'i Island, holds a Bachelor's in Vocal Performance from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Matthew Worth. Roles include Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Baron Zeta in *The Merry Widow*, Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Chief Inspector Pinkley in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder*. His senior recital closed with songs from Queen Lili'uokalani's songbook.

Earlier Kahilu credits include *Spring Awakening*, *South Pacific*, and *West Side Story*. An HPAF Young Singers scholar since 2018, he made his opera debut in 2022 and was featured in Kahilu's *Operaloha* (2023).



## **ANDREW STEELE** **Chip Tolentino/Vice Principal Panch, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Andrew Steele is a tenor based in Boston, MA; he holds a BM in Vocal Performance from Boston Conservatory at Berklee and a MM in Vocal Performance from Boston University. In the fall, he will be pursuing a post-graduate advanced certificate at New York University in Vocal Pedagogy. Recent engagements include *Vespone (La Serva Pedrona/Giventer-Braff)*,

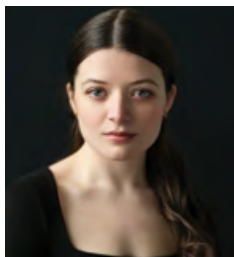
*Benvolio (Roméo et Juliette/BUOI)*, *Pete (The Eleanors/BUOI)*, *Gull (Sea Fever/Valkyrie Opera)*, *Maestro Spinelloccio (Gianni Schicchi/BUOI)*, and *Little Bat (Susannah/Boston Conservatory)*. Outside of performance, Andrew serves his community as a group fitness instructor at Barry's and Equinox.



## **CARMINE TROVATO** **Enoch Snow, *Carousel***

Carmine Trovato is an actor, singer, and dancer originally from Simsbury, CT, currently pursuing a degree in Vocal Performance, Musical Theatre at NYU. Favorite past credits include *Little Women* (Laurie), *Rent* (Ens, u/s Roger & Angel), *Matilda* (Trunchbull). He would like to thank his friends and family for their unwavering love and support.

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



## EMILY VANDAL

**Logainne Schwartzandgrubeniére, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Emily Vandal is a recent graduate of Sacred Heart University with a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Musical Theatre. Some recent credits include Amélie in *Amélie* (Sacred Heart University, Directed by Chase Brock), Sue Snell in *Carrie* (Cirillo Summer Theatre), and a member of the ensemble in *American Idiot* (Sacred Heart University, Directed by Jerry Goehring).

This fall, she will attend NYU to pursue her Master of Music in Vocal Performance with a concentration in Musical Theatre. She is beyond grateful for everyone who has helped shape her into the person she is today! IG: @Emily.Vandal

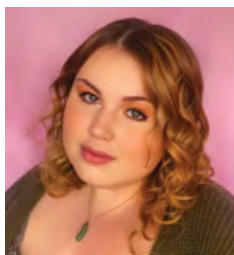


## KYLE VASQUEZ

**Leaf Conebear, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee***

Kyle Vasquez is an incoming Master's candidate in NYU's Music Performance: Music Theater program. Regionally, he has appeared in *West Side Story* at La Comedia Dinner Theatre and *The Fool on a Journey* at the Chain Theatre One Act Festival. Off-Broadway, he performed in *Regicide* at SoHo Playhouse as part of PrideFest. His film and television credits include

*Crutch* (CBS/Paramount+). Kyle has also been featured as a vocalist at venues including The Green Room 42 and House of Yes. He is so excited to be here, sharing his love for performance with everyone!



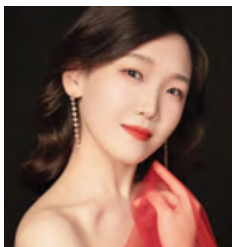
## BRI WILSON

**Nettie Fowler, *Carousel***

Bri Wilson is a current Vocal Performance Musical Theatre MM student at NYU and a graduate of the CSULB theatre program. She is thrilled to be a part of the HPAF! Recent credits include Sister Margaretta in *The Sound of Music*, Marya Dmitriyevna in *Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812*, Riff-Raff in *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *A Christmas Carol*, and more! In addition to performing and

training Bri currently teaches performing arts in schools and studios. Bri wants to thank her family, friends, and mentors for their endless support! Enjoy the show!!

# DEVELOPING SINGERS



**YUHUI YANG**  
**Alicia Hernández, Rise**

Yuhui Yang, Soprano, from Shanghai, China, is a fourth year DMA student studying voice performance Molly Fillmore at University of North Texas. She graduated from Shanghai Conservatory of Music for Bachelor degree and Manhattan school of Music for Master degree and Professional study certificate. Previous credits include Rachael Portman's *Rose/Fox/Water (The Little Prince)* and Offenbach's *Manuelita (Pepito)* with the Dallas Opera, Puccini's *Musetta (La bohème)* with Sherman Symphony Orchestra, J.Strauss's *Adele (Die Fledermaus)*, Mozart's *Despina (Cosi Fan Tutte)*, Massenet's *Cendrillon (Cendrillon)* with UNT opera, *Frasquita/Carmen* with UNT opera, *Barbarina (Le Nozze di Figaro)* with UNT opera.



**RACHEL YEO**  
**Young Woman, A.E. Reverie**

Rachel Yeo is a Los Angeles based soprano. Favorite roles include Ngon Hong in *On Gold Mountain*, Soeur Constance in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Cobweb in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She originated the role of Kiyohime in *Dojoji* at Boston Court Pasadena and appeared in the film adaptation of Gordon Getty's opera *Plump Jack*. She is a member of the LA Opera Chorus and has sung with LA Opera Connects, Lyric Opera of Orange County, and Pacific Opera Project. As a choral singer, Rachel is a member of several award-winning Los Angeles ensembles, including Tonicity and the LA Master Chorale, and has performed as soprano soloist with I Cantori di Carmel.



**JESSICA ZELLER**  
**Mrs. Mullin/Julie Jordan (understudy), Carousel**

Jessica Zeller is a lyric soprano who specializes in opera and musical theatre. She teaches and performs with North Texas Performing Arts (NTPA) in Plano, Texas. Her most recent roles include Lily St. Regis in *Annie*, Alice in *The Addams Family*, and Glinda in *The Wizard of Oz*, the latter two earning her nominations for Best Supporting Performer and Best Singer, respectively, at NTPA's AMPs ceremony. In the summer of 2025, she made her European operatic debut as Beth in Mark Adamo's *Little Women* with the International Lyric Academy in Vicenza, Italy. She studies with Tony Award nominee Christiane Noll.



**IBRAHIM ZENI**  
**David Bascombe/Jigger Cragin (understudy), Carousel**

Ibrahim Zeni is a Vocal Performance major at the University of Michigan. He has recently appeared with the University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society as Giuseppe Palmieri in *The Gondoliers* and Murdo in *The Mikado*. His favorite roles include Aaron Samuels in *Mean Girls*, Patrick Star in *The SpongeBob Musical*, Lucas Beineke in *The Addams Family*, and Peter Shaw in *Silent Sky*. He is delighted to make his Hawaii Performing Arts Festival debut as David Bascombe in *Carousel*.

# HIGH SCHOOL SINGERS



## **MĀHIEHIE CROWE**

**Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Māhiehie Crowe is a 16-year-old performer who specializes in various art forms such as piano, singing, acting, dancing, and songwriting. She is passionate about bringing characters and stories to life through performance and enjoys expressing creativity both on stage and through music. Most recently, Māhiehie played the lead role of Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors*

at Hawaii Preparatory Academy, further developing her confidence, stage presence, and dedication to the performing arts.



## **DAISY DAI**

**Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Daisy Dai is a rising junior at Seabury Hall in Maui. She has studied classical vocal music for the past year, performing works by composers such as Giuseppe Verdi, Antonín Dvořák, and Antonio Cesti, while also exploring musical theater repertoire. Daisy sings in her school choir ensemble and performed “Ave Maria” for a student-run fundraising club that supports local

organizations. She has loved music and the arts since early childhood and hopes to pursue further studies and a future career in the arts. In addition to singing, Daisy enjoys visual arts and values the connection between music, creativity, and performance.



## **MCKENZIE HAWLEY**

**Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

McKenzie Hawley has just graduated high school where she performed in 4 different theatrical productions. The first being *Pirates of Penzance*, playing the role of Edith while volunteering as Assistant Student Director. She performed as Sally in *The Lightning Thief*, as well as an ensemble member. She played Mother Abbess in *The Sound of Music*, and Penny Russell in

*Murder at Crimson House*. In addition, she acted as the witch in *Shrek Jr.* She plans on pursuing a career in Vocal Performance at New York University, with dreams of one day performing on a professional stage.

# HIGH SCHOOL SINGERS



## **PEYTON KENNEDY**

**Army/Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Peyton Kennedy is a sophomore singer, dancer, and actor who is based in Southern Oregon. She has performed in numerous professional and community theatres across the Rogue Valley. Some of her favorite roles include: Ellie in *Freaky Friday* and Eurydice in *Hadestown (Teen Edition)* with Teen Musical Theatre of Oregon. She also participated in Crater High School's production

of *The Addams Family* as Wednesday Addams. The show won the title of "Mainstage Select," performing at the 2026 Oregon State Thespians Festival. Peyton is incredibly honored and excited to become a part of the Hawaii Performing Arts program this summer!



## **AVA KREITER**

**Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Ava Kreiter is a 2026 magna cum laude graduate from Essex High School, in Essex Vermont. She is going to the American Music and Dramatic Academy this fall in NYC to pursue a BFA in Musical Theatre. She has performed as Anastasia in *Anastasia*, The Cheshire Cat in *Alice By Heart*, Amy March in *Little Women*, and Roxie Hart in *Chicago*, her all time favorite role thus far in her

acting career. She made her directing debut this Spring in *Frozen KIDS*. Ava also likes to play both acoustic and electric guitar and harmonize with her friends.



## **OLIVIA MADARA**

**Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Olivia Madara began singing at age eight at the Blue Bear School of Music in San Francisco, where she trained with vocal teacher Amanda Vandermeer and became the youngest student selected for the school's teen All-Star Band. After relocating to Pennsylvania in 2019, Olivia expanded her performance experience through musical theater and chamber choir,

appearing in productions of *Mary Poppins*, *Footloose*, and *Pippin*. As lead alto and President of her school's chamber choir, she has performed locally and on tour in Europe. Passionate about contemporary music, Olivia also performs lead vocals with a band she co-founded in 2023 and has attended summer vocal programs at the Berklee College of Music and the Frost School of Music. She currently studies contemporary pop vocals with Los Angeles-based coach Lis Lewis and will attend New York University in the fall to study Vocal Performance as she pursues a future career in popular music.

# HIGH SCHOOL SINGERS



## **ISABEL NOBLE**

**Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Isabel Noble is a 2026 graduate of Burbank High School. She is passionate about music and is a classical pianist, clarinetist, and vocalist. For the past four years, she has performed with her school's advanced competitive show choir, earning multiple national titles and awards across California and other western states. She has also toured Vienna and Prague with

the Los Angeles Youth Orchestra on an American music tour. Isabel plans to pursue piano performance at Chapman University while continuing her journey in musical theater.



## **MAXWELL QUARTLY**

**Policeman/Captain/Starkeeper/Doctor Seldon, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Maxwell Quartly is a classical vocalist from Tustin, California, and a 2026 graduate of Foothill High School. A four-time recipient of the Academic Award of Excellence in Vocal Performance, he was also honored with the Senior Medallion for Vocal Music.

Maxwell performed with the Foothill Madrigals in Hawaii, Nashville, and New York, including a featured concert at Carnegie Hall and an appearance at the American Choral Directors Association conference. He was a finalist for the Candlelight Concert with Hugh Jackman at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. In fall 2026, he will attend Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music to study under Peter Volpe.



## **UMA SCHER**

**Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Uma Scher is a vocalist and actress from Scarsdale, New York. She is currently involved in choir, theater, and contemporary music, with a strong interest in live band performance. Her performance experience includes school and community productions such as *Chicago: Teen Edition* as Roxie, *The Little Mermaid* as Ursula, as well as live music events. She is excited

to attend the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival and continue developing her artistry and musicianship alongside other young performers!

# HIGH SCHOOL SINGERS



## **REAGAN WEAVER**

**Ensemble, *Carousel* | Soloist, *High School Singer Vocal Showcase***

Reagan Weaver is seventeen years old and currently attends Crater High School located in Southern Oregon, she is so excited to be a part of this amazing experience. She recently starred in Crater High School's production of *The Addams Family* portraying Morticia, winner of Oregon Thespians Mainstage Production 2026. Reagan has also participated in many Teen

Musical Theatre of Oregon productions such as, *Hadestown*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Music Man*, *Footloose*, *Shrek the Musical*, and *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella*.



# OHANA SINGERS



**MARILYN BERNHARDT**  
*Soloist, Ohana Singer Spotlight*

Marilyn thinks singing is challenging because the body is your instrument, and is one of the hardest things to perfect. However, the joy of singing makes it a wonderful work in progress, no matter how old you are. Having HPAF here every July is the highlight of summer for her. She appreciates the amazing instructors who have come for the festival over the years, and especially, Val Underwood, for helping her find her voice.



**BONNIE CHERNI (PINKBONITA)**  
*Soloist, Ohana Singer Spotlight*

Bonnie Cherni (PinkBonita) is a multidisciplinary arts leader, entrepreneur, and public art curator whose work bridges technology, education, and creativity. As founder and Creative Director of Epic Origami, Bonnie has pioneered large-scale origami installations using unconventional materials like copper, canvas, vinyl, and aluminum. Her creations have transformed public spaces from Denver International Airport to the Tokyo American Club. Her work has been featured in Hana Hou Magazine, Keola Magazine, and BigIsland TV. Her passions lie in the performing arts and she loves singing, dancing, playing violin, writing songs, doing aerial, and riding horses.



**STEVEN KAPLAN**  
*Soloist, Ohana Singer Spotlight*

Steve Kaplan, baritone, is looking forward to his fourteenth (!) season as an Ohana/Lifelong Singer. He enjoys art songs, Early Music, opera, and some contemporary artists including Rufus Wainwright and Sara Bareillis. Steve enjoys singing choral music and sings with the Waimea Community Chorus and the Kona Choral Society. He has appreciated the teaching and encouragement of the staff and participants and is anticipating another exciting vocal experience as an Ohana Singer in 2026!

# OHANA SINGERS



## **RUBY OSHIRO**

**Soloist, *Ohana Singer Spotlight***

Ruby Oshiro is currently an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Kanu O Ka Aina Charter School. She most recently was Peppermint Patty in the production of A Charlie Brown Christmas at Kahilu Theatre. Ruby is looking forward to being in another musical production this summer at Kahilu Theatre, Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Lightning Thief. Ruby is passionate about acting, singing, and performing. She loves being able to express herself on stage and bring characters to life.



## **LISA WELLS**

**Soloist, *Ohana Singer Spotlight***

Lisa has been volunteering & participating in the 'Ohana/ Lifelong Singers program since 2012 having sung in the production of *Trial By Jury* as a jury member. In college, she was a member of the chorus in *Trial By Jury* and *Dark of the Moon*, and played Lady Anne in *Camelot*. She has been in charge of the Music ministry at Annunciation/Ascension Mission Catholic churches for 6 years including directing and as cantor. She is a soprano with the Waimea Community Chorus. She wishes to thank Genette and Val for bringing such a wonderful program to Hawai'i.

**THURSDAY,  
JULY 16**

**12:00pm**

**Davies Chapel  
at HPA**

**Ohana  
Singer Spotlight**



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