

FUSE

COLLABORATIONS IN SONG

Friday, May 31, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Edward M. Pickman Concert Hall
Longy School of Music of Bard College



Welcome to **FUSE!**



I'm so very glad you've joined us tonight for a beautiful evening of music, poetry, and live performances! There's something so special about making the choice to come out to support and enjoy the new work of artists, especially during this digital era when we have seemingly infinite ways to spend our time and entertain ourselves. But you've made the choice to be **here** and to devote your attention to five brand new artistic collaborations, to take in the perspectives of your fellow human beings, and to practice the art of savoring the moment.

Because that is what song is really all about. Songs are fleeting things, and demand a certain focus to be fully taken in. Whether silly, profound, achingly beautiful, frightening, optimistic, or bittersweet, the ideas they convey are intense, concentrated versions of all of the things we can feel throughout our lives. In as short a time as a song lasts, we are given a rare window into the depth of human experience. We come together bask in the beauty of a perfectly chosen harmony, a unique expression of language, a lilting melody, a startling image, a final consonant that lingers in the air. And then suddenly the song is over and we are returned to ourselves... but perhaps with some new flavors to enrich our own experience.

As you are about to discover for yourself, the fifteen artists who were chosen to participate in our second annual *FUSE: Collaborations in Song* program are some truly top-notch creators and communicators whom we feel so lucky to have gotten to know over the last several months. It's such a thrilling task to create the teams of poets, composers, and singers who we believe will work well as partners in the creative process, and we never know what will result from these collaborations! We hope you are as delighted as we are by the results and enjoy these five very unique and meaningful creations.

While tonight is the world premiere performance of each of these songs and song cycles, we know that each has a long future of performances ahead of it! We hope that you will consider making a donation so that Boston Singers' Resource and Catalyst New Music can continue bringing talented artists together like this for many years to come. You can find QR codes for both organizations at the end of this program.

Now it's time to sit back and savor - please enjoy!

With the deepest gratitude,

Brendon Shapiro

Executive Director, Boston Singers' Resource

Co-Artistic Director, Catalyst New Music

FUSE COLLABORATIONS IN SONG

A co-production of Boston Singers' Resource & Catalyst New Music

with Brendon Shapiro, piano

I remember snow

Aksuna
Rebecca Wright

Grace Heldridge, mezzo-soprano

Poor Katy

Rachel DeVore Fogarty
Leo Balkovetz

A Murder Ballad

1. Poor Katy
2. The Tall Grass
3. The Saloon
4. All That Trouble
5. The Next Day
6. Someone Must Be Coming

Nicola Santoro, soprano

The Descent

Jonathan Mitchell
Todd Hearon

Juan Suarez, baritone

The Crone Speaks

Ben Morris
Katharyn Howd Machan

- I. Stories
- II. Welcome
- III. Hunger
- IV. In That Cozy House in the Woods
- V. Cloak
- VI. Farewell

Perri di Christina, mezzo-soprano

Wherever You Are

Lisa Neher
Marlanda Dekine

- I.
- II.

Addison Pattillo, soprano

I remember snow

by Rebecca Wright

I remember snow
It's three months late this year
And I'm scared
That I won't know when the last snowflakes are falling
That I'll forget to memorize
The way they float like dryer lint
The way they sting like a shock of spearmint
The way they make the whole desperate rushing world quiet
The way the rest of the city disappears

I remember snow
It's three months late this year
And I'm scared
That I won't be able to describe it
To children who will never see it
That in thirty-seven years from this snowless day
I won't be able to find words
vivid and swirling and beautiful enough
To catch the frigid glitter,
The way it piles at the train station fence,
A half-melted wave in motion,
crashing up against the concrete blocks
Because they must feel the wonder
And the ache of the loss
For possibility to catch their elbow
For them to be willing to continue the work
That I must eventually leave

I remember snow
It's three months late this year
And I'm scared
That I have already seen the end
Quiet and mundane, on a sidewalk in Toronto
I was annoyed that I forgot my snow boots when I packed
Because it was melting through my shoes
But I would give anything for those chilly feet today
To have one more chance
Another moment within
The great tilting spin of the universe,
While stars are born and die
Falling like snowflakes
Melting before their light
Ever reaches our eyes

Give me once more
The sting and the words
And the soaked-through shoes
And time—

Before I have to remember snow

Poor Katy

A Murder Ballad

by Leo Balkovetz

I. Poor Katy

Poor Katy was killed by a Wandering Rider
Who'd promised the girl that he loved her
Gun at his side and revenge on his mind
Her brother cried "Poor, Poor Katy."

2. The Tall Grass

Better watch your step out here in the tall grass!
Me and my brother used to sneak out here
Early mornings... We'd catch Katydids!
"Katydids for Katy", he'd say
We did everything together those days.
Listen... Can you hear them?
The next morning they found me at last.
Hidden in the tall, tall grass.

3. The Saloon

He went to a saloon where they said he might find,
That no good wandering rider;
To the beautiful owner he swore that they'd marry
Once he'd avenged poor, poor Katy.

4. All That Trouble

Don't move...Not a word... Wait for it... Gotcha!
There now. Back outside where you belong!
All that trouble over a Katydid!
Scared of a bug...
You know we've had worse here!
Katydids don't get drunk... refuse to leave.
How about that boy in here today?
'Bout your age?
Swore he'd take me as his bride!
Of course, I told him all about my handsome rider.
Well, if he starts any trouble
We'll throw him out like I did your little Katydid!

5. The Next Day

He returned the next day, the girl to his dismay
Was in the arms of the wandering rider;
Pistols flew out the boy fired with a shout
"This is for poor, poor Katy!"
The bullet flew past the wandering rider
And into the heart of his lover,
Two more shots rang out, boy and rider went down
At the hands of the dying girl's sister.

6. Someone Must Be Coming

Hush... Don't move...
Someone must be coming... someone must have heard...
Oh look! Our Katydid's back!
And to think... Just last night I was scared of little old you!
Can you hear the others? Far from town in the tall grass?
Listen... Can you hear them? Listen...
"Poor Poor Katy. Poor Poor Katy."
Out in the tall grass early in the morning
Hear them sing "Poor, Poor Katy."

The Descent

by Todd Hearon

There never was a time when she was not,
when he thinks about her, if at all,
descending the stair, telling the dark, "Good night,"

stirring his morning coffee, untangling the knot
of hair in the hairbrush discovered in the hall.
There never was a time when she was not

there in the shadows, trimming with her neat
scissors the perfect contour of a hole.
Descending the stair, telling the dark, "Good night,"

he feels her again, he hears again her note
float from the old piano, thinks with a chill,
There never was a time when she was not

Eurydice. He speaks her name, forgets.
Again, the old absurdity appalls:
descending the stair, telling the dark, "Good night."

She is a mystery his mind has gnawed
for centuries. It's always Now in hell;
there never was a time when she was not
descending the stair, telling the dark, "Good night."

The Crone Speaks

by Katharyn Howd Machan

I. Stories

You want stories?
I will give you stories.

I am the woman of the deep wild woods.
My voice rises up, then sinks down, down.
Do you need to know me?
Are you very, very sure?
Then: STORIES!
Once upon and long ago...
You may find yourself within

II. Welcome

I am the witch inviting you in.
I am the gingerbread frightened to flee.
Count your blessings. Count your coins.
But never, never count on me.

Give me your golden hair to braid.
Allow me to change your arms into wings.
I'm the story of shadows and wells,
what wanting sweet berries in winter brings.

Call me Cinders. Call me the bird
that drops rich dresses down from above.
I'm the dark tree that will always give
the never-expected from deepest love.

III. Hunger

A bit of rampion, so fresh, so green,
positioned by the wall where right next door
a woman long for it, the witch unseen
and listening to cries of "More! Please, more!"
The husband climbs again; he loves his wife
and yearns to hold the baby she will bear,
so foolishly again he risks his life
and finds his grinning neighbor standing there.

"You'll give the child to me when she is born,
and I will be her mother, year to year.
My heart needs her; your tie to her is torn,
and I'll protect her, vanquishing all fear."
And so began the doorless tower's tale.
The golden hair. The twisted love. The jail.

IV. In That Cozy House in the Woods

Was she girl? Was she fox?
Ruddy-Fur or Goldilocks?
Certainly the smallest bear
lost his little wooden chair
and Mama found her porridge spoiled
after all the time she'd toiled
and Papa cried out, "There's our bed
no one's troubled since we wed!"
Was she fox? Was she girl?
That glowing spine. That gleaming curl.

V. Cloak

Did it cover her face?
Did it tickle her legs?
Did it warm her small arms?
Did it drape on the basket?
Did it choke tender breath?
Did it snap mushroom stems?
Did it drag upon moss?
Did it blow widely open?
Did it hang like a shroud?
Did it tangle her ankles?
Did it crumble the cake?
Did it smell of old lavender?
Did it pinch at her cheeks?
Did it hide frightened eyes?
Did it call to a wolf,
to a wolf with rough fur,
to a wolf who was destined
to make story with her?

VI. Farewell

Now I have shared myself with you.
Do you know me? Do you know me well?
Never forget that every story
is one person's heaven, another's hell.
A raven's wing may boast bright feathers.
A toad may offer topaz eyes.
Who are you to be so certain
your heart's courage deserves a prize?
May your road extend before you.
May your sea know windy sails.
You, too, might one day find
you are the teller of these tales.

Wherever You Are

by Marlanda Dekine

I.

Bruised as a hydrangea's ear
turned toward summer's sun,
I feel a war begin in my mouth.

The love I have for women
I call my sisters never left.
I see their faces and remember their knives.

I hear a "*hello, child*" in my dreams
from my father's father, whose whippings lash
into my present. I shut my mouth to find a cure
inside my tongue.

Have you ever prayed
for someone you've never met?

Even the morning glories are hurting, no better than me.
May these blue words hold me.
I am seeking the grace of river water.

I want the magic of my grandma's hands,
stirring field peas to make our family new.
I want to say I am her reaped thing.

II.

What am I, if not guilty, living in an empire
where fields of blood made me.

I can mute you
with the press of a button. I smell gunsmoke
and eat apple pie.

I watch warplanes that never stopped
singing destruction. My life bound up with yours,
who, what, and wherever you are. I am a part
of the machine that destroys us wild things.

We are precious and guilty.

And the weeds still bloom purple as when
my grandma was still a girl.

And the river remembered where it used to flow
every time it floods.

And the live oaks have watched us repeating ourselves.
Oh, beloved, the live oaks have watched.



Aksuna is an Australian composer-pianist currently based in Germany. Her background as a classically-trained concert pianist, palliative care music therapist and educator weaves a unique voice into her compositional writing. Her music has been selected as a runner-up in the Australian National Composition Competition, as a finalist in the Fidelio Piano Composition competition and will be part of a piano compilation in the OPIA music label to be distributed as part of Universal Music. Aksuna also scored the award-winning Australian short film, *The Overthrow* and her second solo piano album, *When Snow Melts*, to be released this year, adds to her growing discography. Aksuna channels her focus to bring the story-telling element of the human spirit into her original compositions, merging virtuosic instrumental techniques with emotional ambience. Inspired by the masters such as Rachmaninoff and Ravel, as well as contemporary film composers such as John Powell and Ludvig Göransson, she weaves together technical virtuosity and evocative emotional landscapes. Her music transcends genres, appealing to lovers of classical and modern piano, film scores, and those seeking a profound emotional experience. Her music, described as passionate, imagery-rich, and deeply connecting, is accessible on all major music platforms. Head to www.aksunapianist.com for more information on her background and work, or follow her at @aksunapianist on Instagram for most current updates.



Rebecca Wright (she/her) writes for both page and stage as a poet, playwright, lyricist, and occasional composer. Based in Boston, MA, she grew up in Portland, OR, where her siblings were her first audience, and she developed a love for nature, kombucha, and plaid flannel. She has a deep love for the work of Mary Oliver, Sean Shibe, Steven Sondheim, and Marsha Norman. As a storyteller, her current areas of interest are critique and exploration of capitalism and evangelical fundamentalism, amplification of queer history and joy, recording experiences of a changing and disappearing environment, and working to envision the world which liberation can create. Rebecca holds a bachelor's in voice from Portland State University, and a master's in vocal pedagogy from The Boston Conservatory at Berklee, and applies her intimate knowledge of the human voice to her writing. She won second place in the Fusion magazine short story competition in 2019, and in 2021 created the new musical *The Prince and the Painter* with composer and co-lyricist Kelyvn Koning for the Moonbox New Works Festival. She is currently working on a second musical, as well as an untitled poetry collection. FUSE is Rebecca's first collaborative venture as a poet.



Grace Heldridge is a Boston-based mezzo-soprano originally from Omaha, NE who strives to create honest and compelling performances in multiple musical genres. Grace has portrayed a wide variety of characters, equally at home in opera and musical theater. Her most notable roles include; Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Lazuli (*L'Étoile*), Judge Dodsworth (*Voir Dire*), Hannah Older (*As One*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Nancy (*Albert Herring*), Annio (*La Clemenza di Tito*), Sesto (*Giulio Cesare in Egitto*), Dorothee (*cendrillon*), Dolly Gallagher Levi (*Hello, Dolly!*), Rapunzel (*Into the Woods*), Brenda (*Hairspray*), Bellomy (*The Fantasticks*). Grace's love of art song and concert repertoire have been highlighted by recent performances of Ravel's *Shéhérazade* (Brookline Symphony Orchestra) and Bach's *Cantata BWV 140* (Trinity Choir). Last summer, Grace joined Central City Opera's Festival Season as an Apprentice Artist in the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Artists Training Program. At CCO, Grace covered Lois Lane/Bianca in Cole Porter's Tony Award-Winning musical, *Kiss Me, Kate*. This summer, Grace joins Opera Maine's summer season as a Studio Artist, performing the leading mezzo-soprano role in Ricky Ian Gordon and Mark Campbell's Rappahannock County. Grace holds both an M.M. in Opera ('23) and a PSC in Voice ('24) from The Boston Conservatory at Berklee. She earned a B.M. in Voice from The University of Kansas ('21). In 2020, she was selected as an Emerging Artist at Seagle Festival in Schroon Lake, NY.



Rachel DeVore Fogarty's works have been commissioned, awarded and performed by organizations in the U.S. and internationally, including ACDA, KMEA, IAWM, NATS, the Bryan Symphony, the Fort Dodge Area Symphony, the Oak Ridge Symphony, St. Olaf College, SACRA/PROFANA, Oklahoma State University, University of Kentucky, Conundrum, Tapestry Singers, Muse (Cincinnati Women's Ensemble), Making Waves (Ukraine), the Young New Yorkers' Chorus, the Concert Choral of Nashville, the Astoria Choir, Fresh Squeezed Opera Company NYC, the Six Degree Singers, the Astoria Music Project, the Princeton Girlchoir, Dulciana (Ireland), Voces Inaudita (Scotland), the Luna Nova Music Ensemble, Chicago Fringe Opera with the Fourth Coast Ensemble, Roane Choral Society, the Pittsburgh Compline Choir, the Manhattan Choral Ensemble, the Bowery Trio, the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Sparks & Wiry Cries, Inversion Ensemble, Constellation Men's Ensemble, the Capital Hearings, Cantus and VocalEssence. Her works have been chosen for inclusion in Vox Reflexa's New Millennium Composers project, the Cro Patria Choir Festival, and in the London Contemporary Church Music Festival. Her string quartet, *sky darkening early*, was selected as part of a reading session with the Grammy-nominated JACK Quartet. Upcoming projects include the musical *Unbelievable*, with director Sam Scalomoni (book by John DeVore, lyrics/music by Kevin Fogarty) which was a semifinalist for the National Musical Theater Festival at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center; the musical *A Thousand Faces* (Creative Consultant Ron Chaney, Jr., Director Sam Scalomoni, book by Eric Lane, and lyrics by Kevin Fogarty) which had its first full production in 2022 by the Encore Theater Company in Dexter, Michigan; a chamber commission for the Tennessee based ensemble *Duo Atypique*; and a narrative song cycle commission for *SALT* (Sylvia Stoner-Hawkins, Sharon O'Connell Campbell, Anne Jennifer Nash, Suna Gunther, Young Kim)



Leo Balkovetz is a vocalist and librettist residing in Boston. He has written operatic treatments and supertitles for groups throughout the Boston area. In 2023, Leo was awarded a Live Arts Boston Grant to write the libretto for Quinn Gutman's "Violetta" a queer re-telling of Verdi's "La Traviata" and an updated English language script for Mozart's "La Clemenza di Tito". This year, you can find him on stage in the world premiere of "The Unknowable" with Lowell House Opera, as Beppe in "I Pagliacci" and off stage as NEMPAC's Artistic Associate and supertitlist for Gluck's "Orfeo ed Eurydice".



Soprano **Nicola Santoro** is quickly establishing herself as a foremost interpreter of contemporary music. Most recently, she was an Apprentice Artist with the Chautauqua Opera Company and performed in works such as *Thumbprint (Annu)* and *The Mother of Us All* (Lillian Russell), directed by Omer Ben Seadia and Keturah Stickann and conducted by Kristin Roach and Steven Osgood, respectively. She starred in the collegiate premiere of *The(R)evolution of Steve Jobs* as Chrisann Brennan under the direction of Kevin Newbury and Maestro Michael Christie. She also appeared as Mrs. O'Malley in *It's A Wonderful Life* by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer. As a member of the inaugural Dandelion Opera Institute in 2020, Nicola worked with numerous mentors such as Pierre Vallet, Ailyn Pérez, and more to refine her craft during the pandemic. Other educational programs she has been a part of include *SongFest* and *The CoOperative Program*. Recently, Nicola received the Encouragement Award in the Boston District of The Laffont Competition. In previous years, she was a prize winner in the National Society of Arts and Letters Competition two years in a row, was a semifinalist in the Orpheus Competition, and was a recipient of the distinguished Georgina Joshi International Fellowship. Nicola is active as a soloist and will perform Dvořák's *Stabat mater* and Mozart's *Vesperae solennes di confessore* with the Newton Community Chorus this year. She also will present a recital in collaboration with Boston Opera Collaborative. Nicola has previously sung as a soloist with *The Handel Project* (Alexander's Feast) and with euphoniumist, Demondrae Thurman (*A Summer's Journey*). Nicola received her Master's degree at Indiana University and her Bachelor's degree at Westminster Choir College, where she studied with Carol Vaness and Nova Thomas, respectively. She currently studies privately with Dr. Lynn Eustis.



Jonathan Mitchell is a Chicago-based composer. He graduated from Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music in 2019 with a Bachelor of Music in Composition. Since then, he has composed music and led curricular development for the educational app MusiQuest. He sometimes daydreams of being a professor, mostly for the tweed jackets with elbow patches. Influenced by classical, jazz, and African-American folk music, Jonathan's work is tonal, lyrical, poly-stylistic, and highly accessible. He has a special passion for composing for the voice—combining poetry and music makes him fantasize about being a singer-songwriter, and karaoke reminds him why it's a fantasy. Among those who have performed Jonathan's music are: various players at the Blair School of Music; vocalists and instrumentalists associated with the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music (GLFCAM); Harvard University's Choral Fellows, under the direction of Carson Cooman; and La Banda de Conciertos de San José, under the baton of Thomas Verrier. Jonathan, too, might have been a conductor, if not for his crippling fear of trains and electricity. Outside of composing, Jonathan spends his time having long thinks by Lake Michigan, referring to himself in third person, and trying to find pants that fit.



Todd Hearon is the author of three collections of poems: *Strange Land* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), *No Other Gods* (Salmon Poetry, 2015) and *Crows in Eden* (Salmon Poetry, 2021). He's also a prize-winning songwriter and dramatist who worked for nine years in Boston's Theatre District and has produced two studio albums of original songs (with a third on the way this spring). His first book of poems, *Strange Land*, was selected by then-U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey as winner of the Crab Orchard Poetry Series Open Competition and was favorably reviewed in *Poetry* magazine and other journals for its "poems of uncompromising beauty" (David Ferry); former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky called it "a first book of rare mastery." With these poems, Hearon received a PEN/New England "Discovery" Award and the Friends of Literature Prize from *Poetry* magazine and the Poetry Foundation. With poems from his second collection, *No Other Gods*, Hearon was awarded the Rumi Prize in Poetry (Arts & Letters) and was a finalist for three national prizes: the May Swenson Poetry Award, the Vassar Miller Prize in Poetry and the Lexi Rudnitsky/Editor's Choice Award (Persea Books). His first novella, *Do Geese See God*, appeared in 2022 with *Neutral Zones* Press, and his two studio albums, *Border Radio* and *Yodelady*, released in 2021 and 2023. His poems, plays and essays have appeared in numerous literary journals including *AGNI*, *Arts & Letters*, *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *The Common*, *Harvard Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Literary Imagination*, *Memorious*, *New Ohio Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, *Poetry Ireland*, *Poetry London*, *Salamander*, *Slate*, *Southern Review* and *Southwest Review*. He was awarded the Paul Green Playwrights Prize (North Carolina Writers' Network), the lyrics prize from *American Songwriter* magazine, a Dobie-Paisano Fellowship (University of Texas, Austin) and served as the writer-in-residence at the Frost Place and Dartmouth College. He lives and teaches at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire.



Juan Suarez holds a Masters Degree from the New England Conservatory of Music in Vocal Performance and a Bachelor's Degree from Stetson University. He has most recently appeared onstage in NEMPAC Opera Project's production of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, as well as other engagements with the Boston Festival Orchestra, Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Odyssey Opera, and with the Community Engagement Programs at NEC, featuring a tour of two children's operas for two consecutive years at schools and venues throughout New England. Juan can be heard on Nightingale Vocal Ensemble's debut album, *Composition sped up*, made up entirely of improvised vocal music inspired by art, poetry and photographs submitted by local New England Artists. *Composition sped up* has been hailed by reviewers as a "unique statement that delights the ears" and "a transcendent experience". Juan also sang in the ensemble for Boston Modern Opera Project's Grammy nominated recording of *The Lord of Cries*, an opera by composer John Corigliano and librettist Mark Adamo. Juan currently works with Nightingale Vocal Ensemble as a singer, composer, and board member, in addition to teaching private voice with South Shore Conservatory. He is an active musician in the Boston musical scene.



Ben Morris is a composer and jazz pianist whose work tells unconventional stories and crosses genre boundaries. His projects include music for chamber groups and large ensembles, operas, theater and film scores, and multimedia works. He recently lived in Oslo on a Fulbright Grant and received an American-Scandinavian Foundation Grant to study the influence of folk music on Norwegian jazz. Ben's 2022 debut album, *Pocket Guides*, takes elements from Norwegian folk music, jazz, and chamber music. The music on *Pocket Guides* garnered Ben two Downbeat Awards, two ASCAP Herb Alpert Awards and a Morton Gould Award, a commission from New York Youth Symphony's First Music, and an invitation to perform at the Newport Jazz Festival. A versatile film, theatre, and opera composer, Ben scored the award-winning feature documentary films *American River* and *Saving the Great Swamp: The Battle to Defeat the Jetport*. Ben is a frequent collaborator of librettist Laura Fuentes; his projects with Laura include *Las Auténticas* for the Washington National Opera American Opera Initiative, *The Fall of Man and Other Tales* for the ATLAS B2 Black Box, *Colorado Sky*, a shadow puppet opera in collaboration with Sohop Ensemble and Art Song Colorado, and *The Rip Van Winkles*, a youth opera commissioned by The Glimmerglass Festival. Ben writes for ensembles that blur established genre expectations. He has worked with the American Composers Orchestra, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Jazz at Lincoln Center trombonist Vincent Gardner, unassisted fold, NOW Ensemble, Imani Winds, Boulder Altitude Directive, The Living Earth Show, Playground Ensemble, and the NDR Big Band. He has been a composer fellow at many music festivals and workshops including the Aspen Music Festival and Source Song Festival. He is an assistant professor at Stephen F. Austin State University and graduated from University of Colorado, Rice University, and University of Miami.



Katharyn Howd Machan grew up in Woodbury, Connecticut and Pleasantville, New York. She earned a B.A. in English from the College of Saint Rose, an M. A. in English Literature from the University of Iowa, and a Ph.D. in Interpretation (Performance Studies) from Northwestern University. Since 1975 she has lived in Ithaca, New York. Now as a full professor, she has been teaching Writing at Ithaca College since 1977, in recent years with an emphasis on fairy tales, creative writing, and memoir. In 2002 she was named the first Poet Laureate of Tompkins County, New York. Her poems have appeared in numerous magazines (*Nimrod*, *Yankee*, *The MacGuffin Reader*, *Snake Nation Review*, *Hanging Loose*, *Dogwood*, *Runes*, *Slipstream*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *South Coast Poetry Journal*, *The Hollins Critic*, *The Salmon*, *West Branch*, *Seneca Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, etc.) and anthologies/textbooks (*The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, *The Best American Nonrequired Reading*, *Poetry: An Introduction*, *Early Ripening: American Women's Poetry Now*, *Sound and Sense*, *Writing Poems*, *Literature: Reading and Writing the Human Experience*, etc.), and in 40 collections, most recently *Dark Side of the Spoon* (The Moonstone Press, 2022), *A Slow Bottle of Wine* (winner of the Jessie Bryce Niles Chapbook Competition), *What the Piper Promised* (Alexandria Quarterly Press-national contest winner), *Secret Music: Voices from Redwing, 1888* (Cayuga Lake Books, 2018) and *Katharyn Howd Machan: Selected Poems* (FutureCycle Press, 2018). She and her husband, fellow poet Eric Machan Howd, live joyfully with two cats, Footnote and Byron. For spirit and body, she belly dances.



Praised for her 'rich, surprisingly dark' sound (Parterre Box) and 'precise coloratura' (Cleveland Classical), mezzo-soprano **Perri di Christina** is a versatile artist based in New Jersey. This season, Perri joins the Chautauqua Opera Company as an Apprentice Artist, where she will sing the role of Young Woman in Rene Orth's new opera *Love, Loss*, and the Century Upon Us and cover both *Hänsel and Gretel* and *The Mother in Hänsel und Gretel*. Other season highlights include the role of Ruggiero (Alcina) with Immersion Repertory, the alto soloist in Handel's *Dixit Dominus* with the Manhattan Choral Ensemble, and a featured soloist in St. Patrick's Cathedral's *Midnight Mass*. '22/'23 season highlights include the role of The Dragon in the world premiere of the opera *Iceland* at La MaMa Experimental Theater Club, the alto soloist in Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with The Greenwich Choral Society, and the role of Liza Elliott (Lady in the Dark) with Bronx Opera. Favorite roles from previous seasons include *Sesto* (La clemenza di Tito) with Bronx Opera, *Penelope* (Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria) with Dell'arte Opera Ensemble, *Orfeo* (Orfeo ed Euridice) with Camerata New York Orchestra, and *Cherubino* (Le nozze di Figaro) with Mannes Opera. Perri has sung in training programs across the country, including Teatro Nuovo, Aspen Music Festival, SongFest, and The Emmanuel Music Bach Institute. She is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Mannes School of Music. Perri is the co-creator of *Thrilled to Announce*, an esoteric opera podcast and collective. TTA's mission is to foster solidarity within the classical singer community by opening dialogues about our souls, our shadows, and our futures. Learn more at perridichristina.com.



Dr. Lisa Neher (she/her, "NEER") is an award-winning composer and new music mezzo on a mission to transform audiences through sound, story, and vulnerability. With a voice praised as "full and rich" and "especially alive" (Oregon ArtsWatch), Neher's musical-theatrical fluency and passion for contemporary music have led to performances with Third Angle New Music, Experiments in Opera, Renegade Opera, Really Spicy Opera, Big Mouth Society, Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra, New Music Gathering, the Resonance Ensemble, Opera Theatre Oregon, Queer Opera, and the International Saxophone Symposium. She is a member of Portland Opera Chorus. Neher created the roles of Jennifer in *Chamber Sounds of Singapore's One Thousand Paper Cranes* for Japan by Rita Ueda and Julian of Norwich in Brooke Joyce's *The Showing of Love*. Neher is described as a "visionary composer" (Willamette Week) "supremely talented," a "maestro of beautifully wacky noises" (Oregon ArtsWatch), and author of "liquid, impressionist piano writing and fluent melding" of voices (New York Classical Review). Her compositions are inspired by the climate crisis, the tender love of family and friends, and the eerie mystery of deep ocean life. She has been commissioned and performed by the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Cincinnati Song Initiative, Mirror Visions Ensemble, Third Angle New Music, FearNoMusic, Dinosaur Annex, Alma Ensemble, Opera Elect, Opera Theatre Oregon, Opera Santa Barbara, and New Opera West, among others. Her awards include the Flute New Music Consortium Competition, ICDA/ICF Choral Competition and the Mirror Visions Ensemble Young Composer Competition and runner up in the Celebris Ensemble Choral Competition. She is an alumnus of the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music and the NATS Composer Mentorship Program, working with Tom Cipullo. Neher is on faculty at Lewis & Clark College and runs a thriving private studio in which she coaches singers and composers on the technique, craft, and business of music. www.lisanehermusic.com.



Marlanda Dekine is a poet who makes connections of depth through poetry and dialogue. Her collection of poems, *Thresh & Hold*, won the 2021 New Southern Voices Poetry Prize at Hub City Press. *Thresh & Hold* was adapted into a collaborative short film and collaborative ceremony consisting of her voice, Brittany J. Green's music composition described as "salts with grainy textures and dots with pulsing electronics" by The Washington Post, and Mahkia Greene's expert filmmaking, produced by Castle of Our Skins. Dekine, the owner of {unnamed}, LLC, an organization that utilizes art to guide people to their deepest selves, is also the creator of *i am from a punch & a kiss*, a multimedia book/mixtape project, *SOUL: An Ancestor Workshop*, and *Speaking Down Barriers*, a nonprofit for equity and justice. Her poem, "Ars Poetica", was set to music by Douglas Boyce, performed by her and counterinduction, a chamber ensemble hailed by The New York Times for its "fiery ensemble virtuosity" and for its "first-rate performances" by The Washington Post. Dekine is the 2023 Spoken Word/Poetry Slam Fellow for South Carolina, the 2021 Castle of Our Skins Shirley Graham Du Bois Creative-in-Residence, a Palm Beach Poetry Festival Langston Hughes Fellow, and Tin House Own Path Scholar. The recipient of a Governor's Award from SC Humanities, her work has been published or is forthcoming in The Arkansas International, Orion Magazine, Root Work Journal, Oxford American, POETRY, Emergence Magazine, and elsewhere. Marlanda Dekine is a graduate of Furman University (BA, Psychology), the University of South Carolina (Master of Social Work), and Converse University (Master of Fine Arts in Poetry).



Addison Pattillo (soprano) is a Boston transplant from Dallas, Texas. After spending 4 years as an elementary school music teacher and improv comedian in the Dallas area, she moved to study under Dr. Lynn Eustis at Boston University and graduated in 2023. During her time at BU, Addison performed the principal roles of Diana in Jake Heggie's "If I Were You," Beatriz in Daniel Catán's "La hija de Rappaccini," and Beth March in Mark Adamo's "Little Women," along with covering Fiordiligi in Mozart's "Cosi fan tutte." She was the soprano soloist in Mahler's Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection" with the BU Symphony Orchestra at Boston Symphony Hall and was a finalist for the Carolyn Bailey Argento Vocal Competition, performing at the National Opera Association 2024 convention in Tempe, Arizona. Much like her love of performing improv comedy, Addison gravitates to new music for its open-ended, rule-busting, collaborative nature. She has performed contemporary pieces such as: Phebe Brock (concert presentation) in the opera "Whaling Women" by Jodie Gobel (Boston University), "Music for 18 Musicians" by Steve Reich, and a world premiere of "Space Junk" by Ivan Trevino (both with Lagan Percussion in Waco, Texas.)

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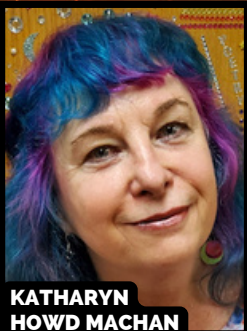
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