

Off-Brand  
OPERA

# JANE EYRE

## THE MUSICAL

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY  
PAUL GORDON

BOOK & ADDITIONAL LYRICS BY  
JOHN CAIRD

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE

DIRECTED BY  
HANNAH GRUENDEMANN

MUSIC DIRECTED BY  
ERIN KENNEDY

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
KYRA GEE

CHOREOGRAPHER  
KIMERER LAMOTHE

PERFORMANCES  
JANUARY 18-20  
@ THEATRE AT ST. JEAN'S



# Off-Brand Opera

presents

## Jane Eyre: The Musical

Music and Lyrics by Paul Gordon

Book and Additional Lyrics by John Caird

Based on the novel by Charlotte Brontë

Hannah Gruendemann, Director

Erin Kennedy, Music Director

Kyra Gee, Assistant Director

Kimerer LaMothe, Choreographer

Dan Drew, Lighting Designer

### Cast:

Jane Eyre.....	Devony Smith
Edward Fairfax Rochester .....	Wayne Hu
Mrs. Fairfax .....	Michelle Jennings
Blanche Ingram.....	Veronica Shea
Young Jane.....	Emily Reusswig
Helen.....	Nicole Goldstein
Bertha Rochester.....	Jenna Young
Richard Mason.....	RJ Christian
Adèle .....	Emily Mesa
Robert .....	Dan Drew
Mrs. Reed.....	Lou Ann Salkin
St. John.....	Will Paddock
Mr. Brocklehurst.....	Andres Perez
Grace Poole .....	Kyra Gee
Miss Scatcherd.....	Tiffani Grace
Lady Ingram .....	Christine Duncan
Swing.....	Sophia Mortensen

### Orchestra:

Piano/Conductor.....	Erin Kennedy
Violin .....	Thomas Purcell
Cello .....	Anthime Miller
Reed 1 .....	Noah Vece
Reed 2 .....	Will Schrantz
Trumpet.....	Benjamin Haden

## Musical Numbers

### ACT I:

Jane .....	Edward Fairfax Rochester
The Attic .....	Jane Eyre
Children of God .....	Schoolgirls, Mr. Brocklehurst, Mrs. Reed, & Miss Scatcherd
Forgiveness .....	Helen Burns, Young Jane, & Jane Eyre
The Death of Helen Burns.....	Helen Burns, Young Jane, & Ensemble
The Graveside.....	Jane Eyre, Young Jane, & Ensemble
Sweet Liberty.....	Jane Eyre & Ensemble
Secrets of the House.....	Ensemble
Perfectly Nice .....	Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, & Jane Eyre
The Icy Lane.....	Ensemble & Jane
The Master Returns.....	Mrs. Fairfax & Robert
The Captive Bird.....	Edward Fairfax Rochester
As Good As You.....	Edward Fairfax Rochester
The Fire .....	Bertha Mason & Ensemble
After the Fire .....	Edward Fairfax Rochester
Secret Soul .....	Jane Eyre & Edward Fairfax Rochester
Society's Best/Galloping Up to the Drive .....	Mrs. Fairfax & Ensemble
The Finer Things .....	Blanche Ingram
Oh How You Look In The Light .....	Blanche Ingram, Edward Fairfax Rochester, & Ensemble
The Pledge .....	Jane Eyre & Edward Fairfax Rochester
Sirens .....	Edward Fairfax Rochester, Jane Eyre, & Bertha

**There will be one 15-minute intermission.**

### ACT II:

Sympathies Exist.....	Ensemble
The Scream .....	Richard Mason, Bertha Mason, Edward Fairfax Rochester, & Ensemble
Painting Her Portrait .....	Jane Eyre
In The Light Of The Virgin Morning.....	Jane Eyre & Blanche Ingram
Oh, Sister.....	The Fortune Teller
The Proposal .....	Jane Eyre & Edward Fairfax Rochester
The Chestnut Tree .....	Grace Poole & Servants 1 + 2
Slip of a Girl.....	Mrs. Fairfax, Jane Eyre, Robert, & Adele
The Wedding .....	Ensemble
The Secret of the House/Wild Boy ....	Edward Fairfax Rochester, Jane Eyre, Bertha, & Ensemble
Sirens (Reprise) .....	Jane Eyre & Edward Fairfax Rochester
Farewell Good Angel .....	Edward Fairfax Rochester
Rain .....	Ensemble
The Death of Mrs. Reed .....	Mrs. Reed, Jane Eyre, & Ensemble
The Voice Across The Moors .....	St. John Rivers, Jane Eyre, & Edward Fairfax Rochester
Return to Thornfield.....	Mrs. Fairfax
Brave Enough For Love .....	Jane Eyre, Edward Fairfax Rochester, & Ensemble

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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Published in 1847 under the pseudonym Currer Bell, Charlotte Brontë's groundbreaking novel *Jane Eyre* follows its titular heroine on a journey throughout her life and across northern England. After escaping an abusive childhood, she finds a position as a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she meets the brooding and once-handsome Edward Fairfax Rochester. As Thornfield's secrets threaten to overwhelm the two, Jane must learn to weigh what she longs for with her strict principles of right and wrong.

Unlike many modern stories, Jane's journey throughout the novel is not one of simply learning faith or morality, but instead learning how and when to use it. As opposed to the stricter senses of religious right and wrong that helped her survive a terrible childhood, Jane's journey into adulthood forces her to confront people who don't fit so neatly within those categories. By the end of the story, our heroine learns to soften into a version of morality that is brave and inclusive enough to love people as they are, even with their flaws and contradictions and sins, and comes to understand that sometimes people can only do the best with what the choices available to them.

Which brings us to Rochester and Bertha, the tragic marriage at the heart of the novel. I knew that without a glimpse more of insight into Rochester's perspective, it would be easy to read Brontë's brooding hero as manipulative or unkind, instead of someone who has no good options and is trying to do right by everyone else, and is nonetheless forced to live a lie. Rochester, too, must grow enough to let go of his secrets and to trust others with the whole of himself in order to be truly worthy of Jane's love. In this adaptation, Bertha is not a secret from the audience as she is in the novel, so there are more moments to see her as human in her madness and despair, rather than simply a ghost in the attic, haunting Thornfield even while still alive.

In working on this project, I've been amazed at how many people have expressed such deep love for the original work, and how many were excited to arrive to, or return to, the musical adaptation. As the novel is such a beloved classic, it has been adapted countless times, starting with a stage play only two years after the book was published, and its first (silent) film in 1910. Paul Gordon's musical adapts much of its text directly from the novel and utilizes its sweeping score to convey the atmospheric heart of this Gothic story. We hope that our production reminds you of why you might have fallen in love with this tale in the first place. The stories and lessons we learn as children never truly leave us and, as Jane learns by the show's final number, they can inspire us to become the kindest, most fulfilled, and happiest versions of ourselves that we know how to be.

– Hannah Gruendemann

## MUSIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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From the orchestra, *Jane Eyre* feels more like an opera than a musical for the sheer volume of music fit into 2.5 hours. The score is almost a character of its own, setting the scene from the beginning and creating the lush, haunting world of Brontë's windswept moors. Musical cues—from chordal moments that could have been pulled straight from a church service to opportunities for actors to engage in some serious classical singing—draws us into a period world, while the underlying structure of the music remains definitively modern and inviting to a contemporary audience. Motivically, the score is dense and highly economical, using and reusing a handful of memorable themes to draw connections throughout the show. I invite you to choose one—perhaps the opening cello “Secrets of the House” motif, or the “My hope of heaven lies” melody introduced in “Graveside Scene”—and follow it as it reappears throughout the performance to tell its own story.

Any musical discussion of *Jane Eyre* would be lacking without addressing the vocal possibilities and demands of this show. Because it exists in the space between opera and musical theater, our production has taken full advantage of the new axis of storytelling available to us through each actor's singing style and timbre. Some characters show their resistance to change by performing in a fully operatic style; others represent an untethered nature by belting. Many of our actors do both, adding another axis of dimension to the production's storytelling by vocally embodying their character's state at different moments in time. In the rehearsal room, we have talked at length about these decisions—what does it mean when Jane, raised to cling tightly to her faith and beliefs, allows her classical sound to break down into a belt? What is evoked by Rochester's alternating moments of operatic baritone power and the vulnerability of his falsetto? This process of thinking about not just what a character sings but how they sing it adds a visceral element to the music, opening up a new axis on which to express emotion. All that I can say more of this is that it has been a true privilege to collaborate with a cast possessing the vocal flexibility to skillfully and compellingly execute these choices.

With all this—gentle audience, welcome to *Jane Eyre*. I hope that in this performance you may open yourself to Jane's world, and find opportunity to follow her lead and explore the possibilities residing within your own secret soul.

– Erin Kennedy

## SPECIAL THANKS

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Thank you to the people in our lives who have supported us throughout the all-consuming process of creating and putting together this show. Off-Brand Opera owes its existence to a tireless team of people donating their time, money, skills, rehearsal spaces, childcare, support, and creativity to make this show happen.



# Our Artists



**DEVONY SMITH**  
Jane Eyre



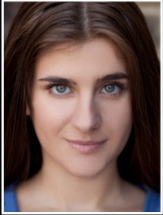
**WAYNE HU**  
Edward Rochester



**MICHELLE JENNINGS**  
Mrs. Fairfax



**VERONICA SHEA**  
Blanche Ingram



**EMILY REUSSWIG**  
Young Jane



**NICOLE GOLDSTEIN**  
Helen



**JENNA YOUNG**  
Bertha Rochester



**RJ CHRISTIAN**  
Richard Mason



**EMILY MESA**  
Adele



**DAN DREW**  
Robert



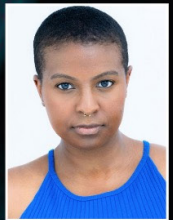
**LOU ANN SALKIN**  
Mrs. Reed



**WILL PADDOCK**  
St. John



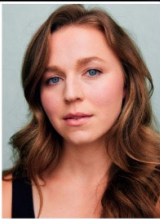
**ANDRES PEREZ**  
Mr. Brocklehurst



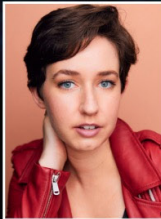
**TIFFANI GRACE**  
Miss Scatcherd



**CHRISTINE DUNCAN**  
Lady Ingram



**KYRA GEE**  
Grace Poole /Asst. Dir.



**HANNAH GRUENDEMANN**  
Director



**ERIN KENNEDY**  
Music Director



**KIMERER LAMOTHE**  
Choreographer



**THOMAS PURCELL**  
Violin



**ANTHIME MILLER**  
Cello



**BENJAMIN HADEN**  
Trumpet



**NOAH VECE**  
Woodwinds



**WILL SCHRANTZ**  
Woodwinds

# ABOUT OUR ARTISTS

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**RJ Christian** (Richard Mason) is a Singer, Actor, Composer-Lyricist, and TikTok. He graduated from NYU Steinhardt with a BM in Vocal Performance and studied song writing under Joe Church. RJ is a member of BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Writing Workshop and the Theatre Now Writers Lab. His TikTok page @RJtheComposer gained over 100k followers during the pandemic from musical theater content. RJ was a composer and Lyricist on the *Ratatouille* TikTok musical and *For You Paige*, the first commissioned Tiktok Musical. As performer, RJ portrayed Jim Conley in American Theatre Group's *Parade* and can be heard as Macgyver on the *Macgyver the Musical* Cast Album and can be seen as Ferb in *Musical Without a Cool Acronym the Phineas and Ferb Parody Musical*. RJ is a co-artistic director of The Hearty Meal, who produce regular accessible theater performances throughout NYC.

**Dan Drew** (Robert) is thrilled to be doing his first show with Off-Brand Opera! Dan is a native of Newark NJ, and holds a degree from Rutgers University in Theater Arts and History. Following this production, he will be returning to his role as Choreographer, Principle Dancer, and Guest Vocalist with the National Tour of *A Celtic Angels Christmas*. Past Credits: *Memphis* (Huey), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Jesus), *A Little Night Music* (Henrik), *Hairspray* (Corny Collins), *South Pacific* (Cable), *A Little Princess* (Capt. Crewe), *Into the Woods* (Cinderella's Prince). IG: @dan\_drew3 / daniel drew jr.com

**Christine Duncan** (Lady Ingram) has always been fascinated by the voice and the different ways it can sound, convey emotion and tell a story. Trained simultaneously in classical, world folk and musical theater, she has developed a passion for a diversity of vocal styles and projects that cross genre boundaries. Christine has worked with companies such as Grammy-winning Odyssey Opera, Beth Morrison Projects, New Amsterdam Opera, The Center for Contemporary Opera, Astoria Music Festival and the Narnia Festival. Favorite recent roles include Maurya in *Riders To The Sea: The Musical*, The Witch in *Into The Woods* and La Principessa *Suor Angelica*.

**Kyra Gee** (Grace Poole/Assistant Director) is excited to be making her Off-Brand Opera

debut! Kyra is an actor and director, and also works as a math and science tutor for middle and high school students. Previous performance credits include *A Chorus Line* (Maggie), *A Few Good Men* (Jo Galloway), and *Mary Jane* (Mary Jane). Previous directing and assistant directing credits include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Nietzsche! The Musical*, and *Sweeney Todd*. Kyra is a graduate of Yale University, where she double majored in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology and Theatre & Performance Studies. kyragee.com.

**Tiffani Grace** (Miss Scatcherd) Born and raised in New York, Tiffani is a business analyst-turned-actor, singer, and writer. She appeared in Off-Brand Opera's production of *Carousel* and couldn't be more excited to return for *Jane Eyre!* Tiffani holds a Bachelor's degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology and is an alum of the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York City. Recent performances include *Fluffy the Pine* (Forager Theater Company), *Beatrice* (the cell), and *High School Musical* (Yorktown Stage). She recently wrote a one-act play, *A Salted Womb*, and looks forward to its first installment, premiering this year as a staged reading.

**Nicole Goldstein** (Helen) is an NYC-based crossover artist with an affinity for both Opera and Musical Theatre. Nicole has had the honor of performing at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Radio City Music Hall, Opera America and more. Credit highlights include: *Iolanthe* (Celia) and *Anyone Can Whistle* (High Soprano Soloist) at Carnegie Hall, *Dogfight* (Rose) and *The Light in the Piazza* (Clara u/s) at Red River Lyric Opera, & *Aeterna* (Aeterna) world premiere at The Narnia Vocal Arts Festival, *On the Right Track* (The Woman u/s) at AMT Theatre, *Pietà* (Francesca) with Off-Brand Opera, and singing with New York City Opera for the American premiere of *Vessels of Light* by Lera Auerbach. Nicole received her Bachelor of Music from Oberlin Conservatory, as well as a Graduate Certificate from the Professional Conservatory of Musical Theatre at The New York Film Academy.

**Hannah Gruendemann** (Director) is a director, composer, writer, and performer raised in Los Angeles, CA. She recently completed a year-long research fellowship studying the intersection of

musical performance and the natural world in Spain, Italy, the UK, Indonesia, and Aotearoa New Zealand, which included producing and assistant directing the world premiere of a musical about reducing carbon emissions, working on a permaculture coconut farm, and walking 550 miles chasing music across Spain. Recent performance credits include Dame Hannah (Ruddigore) and Elizabeth Nietzsche (Nietzsche! The Musical), and she has had recent compositional premieres at the Northwestern Beinen School of Music, I/O New Music Festival, and the New Explorative Oratorio Voice Festival.

**Benjamin Ray Haden** (Trumpet) is a trumpeter and Master of Music Candidate at The Juilliard School. Originally from Asheville, North Carolina, he holds a Bachelor of Arts from Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina, where he studied Music and Religious Studies. Ben's major teachers have included Dr. William Lawing (Davidson College), Alex Wilborn (Charlotte Symphony), Raymond Mase (The Juilliard School), and Christopher Martin (New York Philharmonic). Ben is the recipient of numerous grants supporting independent creative and research-based work, most recently including The Music and Reconciliation Project, exploring music's intersections with the multifaceted work of healing personal, social, political, and ecological divisions.

**Wayne Hu** (Edward Rochester) Taiwan-born actor/singer/musician Wayne Hu has established himself as a true modern musical artist, deftly navigating across genres with his commanding vocals, nuanced musicality and magnetic stage presence. The 2013 graduate of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music and receipt of the Wilfred Bain Opera Fellowship has performed roles on the main stage of over 30 opera and theatre productions across the country. Former engagements include *La Fanciulla del West* (Bello) and *Candide* (Lion/Maximilian cover) with NYCO, *Camelot* (Sir Sagrimore) with The Glimmerglass Festival, *Tosca* (Scarpia) with New Rochelle Opera, *Les Misérables* (Enjolras) with Amarillo Opera and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (Gaston) with Theatre by the Sea.

**Michelle Jennings** (Mrs. Fairfax) Off-Broadway appearances include Diva/Executive in *A Sketch of New York* (Producers Club), and Donatella in *Mike and Mindy's Wild Weekend Jam* (Players Theatre). Most recently, she was Dee Dee in *The Prom* (Media Theatre, PA); Ariel in *Grumpy Old*

*Men* (Fireside Theatre, WI); Mother Abbess in *The Sound of Music* (Black Rock Theatre, CT); Ida in *Titanic* (Milwaukee Rep) and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in NYC. Michelle originated the roles of Thjodhild in the opera film, *Freydis and Gudrid*, releasing in 2024; and Pamela Hamilton-Ford in *Divas Unleashed - The Benefit*, an operatic comedy which she co-wrote and performs around the US. Thanks to my husband, Tom! @michellejenningsings

**Erin Kennedy** (Music Director) is a music director, pianist, and singer originally from St. Paul, Minnesota. Her training in opera, musical theater, choral music, and collaborative piano come together to create an interdisciplinary style that blurs boundaries between genres and adapts traditional performance practices for modern audiences. She is a co-founder of Off-Brand Opera, where she previously music directed *Carousel* and *Into the Woods*. Recent music directing credits include the York Theatre, Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company, Green Room 42, and Don't Tell Mama. More at erinkatkenedy.com!

**Kimerer LaMothe** (Choreographer) An award-winning author, dancer, playwright, and scholar of religion, Kimerer (PhD, Harvard University) is an advocate for dance in everything she does. In addition to choreographing two solo dance concerts (*Genesis* and *On Fire*) and many musicals, she has written the book, lyrics, and music for two musicals (*Nietzsche* and *Happy If Happy When*); composed a song cycle; and written, directed & performed in six musical revues. Kimerer is also the author of six nonfiction books, including *Nietzsche's Dancers* (Palgrave Macmillan) & *Why We Dance* (Columbia University Press). Her first musical appeared in New York City as part of the New York New Works Theatre Festival, the Planet Connections Theatre Festivity, and fully produced for five performances at the Gene Frankel Theatre. Other performance venues include Harvard University, Swarthmore College, Southern Vermont Arts Center, American Academy of Religion, Dance Scholars Association, and the Fort Salem Theater (Cabaret & MainStage). LaMothe has received fellowships for her creative work from the Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Study; the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, and the Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council (twice). kimererlamothe.com



**Emily Mesa** (Adele) is a Latinè performer, writer, and activist. A proud child of immigrants, Emily is deeply connected to her Latin culture and indigenous roots and hopes, through her work, to be an advocate and activist for her community. This is her first show with Off-Brand Opera and she is thrilled! National Tours: *Pete the Cat's Big Hollywood Adventure* (TheatreWorksUSA), NYC Theatre: *En Las Sombras* (Parity Productions), *The Oresteia* (Gallery Players); Film: *IN2U* (Garage Productions). Education: BFA Acting '22 Ithaca College.

**Anthime Miller** (Cello) is an internationally acclaimed composer and performance artist based in Brooklyn. Anthime is the composer-in-residence for The Circle Theater of New York and a regular composer and actor with the National Theater of Luxembourg. Anthime is Principal Cellist of the Regina Opera Company and plays with New Amsterdam Opera, the Greenwich Village Orchestra and chamber ensembles across North America and Europe. They're very excited to return to the stage with Off-Brand Opera! Recent Acting Credits - Alfred Stieglitz - *Nearby*, *Faraway* 2022, Bollingbroke/Jester - *Richard II* 2022, Ferryman - *Strangers* 2018, Fagin - *Oliver!* 2017

**Sophia Mortensen** (Swing) is a mezzo soprano based in New Jersey, though her love of music and classical singing began in Washington, D.C. and the Kennedy Center's children's operas. As a result, she is passionate about bringing opera to all kinds of audiences, even the ones who might think opera isn't "for them." She is the Vice President of the Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company. She graduated from the Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College with her Masters in Vocal Performance. She sang the role of Ljubica in the NYC premiere of Ana Sokolović's chamber opera *Svadba*. She has also sung roles including Phoebe in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Princess Margaret in *The Student Prince*, and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*.

**Will Paddock** (St. John) is very excited to be joining Off-Brand Opera for *Jane Eyre*. Will has performed in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* with Lamplighters Music Theatre, Mayo (World Premiere) with the Crane Opera

Ensemble, *Wizard of Oz* (Tinman) with Ocean City Theatre Co., *Ring of Fire* (Music Director and Man #3) with Round Barn Theatre, and in 18 productions with the College Light Opera Company including: *All Shook Up* (Dennis), *Assassins* (John Hinckley Jr.), and *She Loves Me* (Arpad). He would like to thank his friends, family, and Caitlin for all their love and support!

**Andres Perez** (Mr. Brocklehurst) Villains, cads, and rogues are the preferred repertoire for baritone Andres Perez. Known for his powerful yet artistic interpretations, Andres has both delighted and thrilled audiences. Performed roles include Scarpia (*Tosca*), Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Marcello (*La Boheme*), Germont (*La Traviata*), Silvio (*I Pagliacci*), Renato (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), Dr. Miracle & Dappertutto (*Les Contes d'hoffmann*), Valentin (*Faust*), Gianni (*Gianni Schicchi*), Papageno (*The Magic Flute*), Umberto (*La Serva Padrona*), Melchior (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*), Monterone (*Rigoletto*), Escamillo (*Carmen's Community*), Boatswain (*HMS Pinafore*). Oratorio/Concert soloist in the Faure *Requiem*, Mozart *Requiem*, *The Seven Last Words of Christ*.

**Thomas Purcell** (Violin) New York City-based violinist Thomas Purcell has enjoyed a versatile career as a performer and educator. He has performed in many prestigious concert halls around the United States and Europe. Dedicated to growth and development of contemporary music, Thomas has commissioned and premiered numerous solo violin and chamber music works. As a freelance violinist, he has performed in many shows and orchestras in the greater NYC area.

**Emily Reuswig** (Young Jane) is thrilled to be involved in her second OBO production! You may recognize her as Louise Bigelow from Off-Brand's 2022 production of *Carousel*. Emily spent the summer in Narni, Italy performing in her first opera: Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* (Dew Fairy/ Sandman/Featured Dancer). She also choreographed for APTC and Forestburgh Academy's productions of *Hercules* and *Spongebob The Musical*. Immediately after, Emily prepared to tackle her favorite theatrical role to date: Regan MacNeil in the East Coast Premiere of *The Exorcist*. (Yes... head spin and all.) Emily adores this classic story, and hopes you enjoy the show!

**Lou Ann Salkin** (Mrs. Reed) holds a MFA in acting from the Asolo Conservatory/Florida State University. Upon graduation, she performed in regional theater and at Radio City Music Hall. She founded Eccentric Theater Company with her daughter Veronica and loves creating art & producing magic. Thanks to Erin & Hannah for this great opportunity.

**Veronica Shea** (Blanche Ingram) is a singer, actor, producer and digital marketer passionate about storytelling and sharing authentic onstage connection with audiences. She is excited to be back on stage with her OBO family after performing as Julie Jordan in *Carousel*, La Diretrice in *Pietà*, and Cinderella in *Into the Woods*. Other recent roles include Musetta in Light Opera of New Jersey's production of *La Bohème*, Juno in *Aeterna* at the Narnia International Vocal Arts Festival, Rosalinda in Eccentric Theater Company's *Die Fledermaus*, and Mabel in both Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan's and Summit Chorale's *The Pirates of Penzance*. She is a Founder of Eccentric Theater Company and Off-Brand Opera, and the Director of Marketing at The York Theatre Company.  
[veronicashea.com](http://veronicashea.com)

**Devony Smith** (Jane Eyre) Known for her "sensual" and "strong" voice (*New York Times*), California-born mezzo soprano Devony Smith is known for her command of a wide variety of operatic and concert repertoire. Last season held a variety of role debuts for Devony including the title role in Rossini's *Cenerentola* with Opera Modesto, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with New York City Opera, the Rooster in a new orchestral arrangement of *The Cunning Little Vixen* with Opera Theater Freiburg, Sesto in *Clemenza di Tito* with Bronx Opera, Maddalena in *Rigoletto* with Bohemian Jersey Opera, and Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* at Teatro Comunale di Giuseppe Manini di Narni. Devony frequently collaborates

with composers and recently premiered Little River Songs by Grammy-award winning composer Jennifer Higdon with Lyric Fest in Philadelphia. This coming season, she sing the alto soloist in the premiere of Benjamin Wenzelberg's *Christmas Oratorio* with Lyric Fest and will also solo in the world premiere of Luna Pearl Woolf's staged oratorio *Number Our Days* at the new Perelman Performing Arts Center at the World Trade Center in New York City with Trinity Wall Street. Outside of the operatic repertoire, Devony is an established concert singer and recently made her Carnegie Hall debut as the alto soloist in Dan Forrest's *Jubilate Deo* with Manhattan Concert Production and was the alto soloist in Vivaldi's *Gloria* at Carnegie with MidAmerica Productions. She was also a featured recitalist with Carnegie Hall Citywide and sang her debut of Mahler's *4th Symphony* with the Colburn Orchestra in Los Angeles.

**Noah Vecce** (Reeds) graduated from Kennesaw State University in 2011 under the tutelage of Sam Skelton. Since then his experience playing a variety of styles and instruments has made him an active member of the New York City music scenes. He has performed with numerous local theaters as a pit musician, as well as travelled the world with international tours to Australia, Saudi Arabia, Europe, and Canada. In addition to performing, Noah is passionate about teaching, and has spent years as a private teacher of saxophone, clarinet, and flute. He is also a Vandoren Artist-Clinician, and conducts clinics and masterclasses at schools, businesses, and conferences around the NYC area.

**Jenna Young** (Bertha Rochester) is so excited to be playing Bertha in Jane Eyre! Jenna is a student at Pace University getting a BFA in Musical Theatre and is set to graduate in the spring! Jenna is so grateful for this opportunity and sends thanks and love to family and friends.



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## ABOUT OFF-BRAND OPERA

In a world where brand definition rules, three singers found themselves longing for a space to play around with something different—something off-brand. Tradition told them that's not *how it's done*. But what if it could be?

**Off-Brand Opera** strives to push and blur the boundaries of genre and performance practice, bringing musical communities together in the service of telling a story. We encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration in order to foster fresh, relatable, and relevant interpretations of beloved works.

### Off-Brand Opera is committed to:

- Creating a safe space for artists to take risks when it comes to performance practice and genre.
- Performing in intimate, non-traditional venues to foster audience connection, communication, and immersion.
- Hiring musicians from a diverse set of musical backgrounds, including opera, musical theater, jazz, folk, hip-hop/R&B, and pop/rock.
- Welcoming project ideas from audience members, friends, and donors.

## OFF-BRAND OPERA BOARD

Christine Duncan • Erin Kennedy • Veronica Shea  
Phoebe Corde • Brendan Hartnett • Jake Landau • Leslie Andrea Williams

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