

Off-Brand
OPERA

SPARK

AN EXPERIMENTAL DEBUT CONCERT

MAY 13 & 14 AT 7:30PM

AT SOAPBOX GALLERY (636 DEAN ST, BROOKLYN, NY)

Off-Brand Opera

presents

SPARK

an experimental debut concert

May 13 & 14, 2022 at 7:30pm

Soapbox Gallery (636 Dean Street, Brooklyn, NY)

Off-Brand Opera *gets lit* with our first concert, **SPARK!** Showcasing the work of composers, choreographers, and writers who represent nearly 400 years of theatrical history, **SPARK** presents an evening of interdisciplinary songs and scenes that transform traditional operatic elements to tell contemporary stories. This program is entirely comprised of new and newly-transformed work, from world premieres to re-devised, arranged, and freshly translated reimaginings of the classical repertoire.

Our Cast & Creative Team

Stacey Canterbury	<i>soprano</i>
Misha Culver	<i>dancer</i>
Phoebe Corde	<i>dramaturg & writer</i>
Christine Duncan	<i>mezzo-soprano, deviser & translator</i>
Kayla Faccilongo	<i>mezzo-soprano & guitarist</i>
Emily Garber	<i>librettist</i>
Shira Helena Gitlin	<i>director</i>
Bea Goodwin	<i>librettist</i>
Brendan Hartnett	<i>director & deviser</i>
E.B. Hinnant	<i>tenor & actor</i>
Felix Jarrar	<i>composer</i>
Erin Kennedy	<i>soprano, pianist, deviser, & translator</i>
Jake Landau	<i>composer, pianist, arranger, & translator</i>
Anna Larranaga	<i>actor</i>
Mark Martinez	<i>tenor</i>
Anthime Miller	<i>cellist</i>
Sophia Mortensen	<i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Aaron Petrovich	<i>baritone</i>
Nathan Repasz	<i>percussionist</i>
Lotus Rogers	<i>mezzo-soprano & actor</i>
Veronica Shea	<i>soprano, director, & translator</i>
Steve Valenzuela	<i>baritone</i>
Leslie Andrea Williams	<i>choreographer, movement direction/staging, actor, & writer</i>

Program

Amor, dicea

Veronica Shea, soprano

Misha Culver, dancer

with Mark Martinez, Aaron Petrovich, & Steve Valenzuela

A historically-informed performance excerpted from Claudio Monteverdi's *Lamento della ninfa*.

Echo & Narcissus

Directed by Shira Helena Gitlin

Lotus Rogers, Echo | E.B. Hinnant, Narcissus

A new mini-musical based in Greek myth by Jake Landau and librettist Emily Garber.

Madamina, il catalogo è questo*

from *Don Giovanni* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Sophia Mortensen, mezzo-soprano

*This program's series of "miscast arias" offer fresh takes on A-list opera hits, all translated by Erin Kennedy with consultation by Jake Landau and Veronica Shea.

Clemenza

Directed by Shira Helena Gitlin

Anna Larranaga, Death | Lotus Rogers, Aisa | Leslie Andrea Williams, Ana

World Premiere! A new scene by Phoebe Corde with underscoring derived from Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* by Jake Landau.

La donna è mobile*

from *Rigoletto* by Giuseppe Verdi

Stacey Canterbury, soprano

----- Short Break -----

6 Feet Apart

Directed by Brendan Hartnett

Mark Martinez, Charlie | Sophia Mortensen, Sarah | Veronica Shea, Lucy

World Premiere! A new scene by Felix Jarrar with libretto by Bea Goodwin snapshotting the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

E lucevan le stelle*

from *Tosca* by Giacomo Puccini

Christine Duncan, mezzo-soprano

Amor, dicea

Kayla Faccilongo, mezzo-soprano & guitar

with Veronica Shea

A modern reprise of Monteverdi's *Amor, dicea* with a new English translation by Jake Landau.

Habanera*

from *Carmen* by Georges Bizet

Aaron Petrovich, baritone

Short Break

Machindoll

Directed by Brendan Hartnett | Choreographed/Staged by Leslie Andrea Williams

Veronica Shea, Young Woman | Steve Valenzuela, Husband

A new scene devised by Erin Kennedy & Brendan Hartnett with text from Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* and music from "Les oiseaux dans la charmille" (*Les Contes d'Hoffman* by Jacques Offenbach).

Jazz Funeral

"When I Am Laid" from *Dido & Aeneas* by Henry Purcell

arranged by Jake Landau

Steve Valenzuela, baritone

Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno

Directed by Brendan Hartnett | Choreographed/Staged by Leslie Andrea Williams

Misha Culver, Dancer | Christine Duncan, Truth | Kayla Faccilongo, Bellezza

Erin Kennedy, Youth | Mark Martinez, Time

A reimagination of G.F. Handel's oratorio, *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (The Triumph of Time and Truth), devised and condensed by Christine Duncan into a new 20-minute work. New translations by Christine Duncan with additional text by Jake Landau and Leslie Andrea Williams.

SPECIAL THANKS

Thank you to the people in our lives who have supported us throughout the all-consuming process of creating and putting together this show, doing everything from acting as ideological sounding boards to welcoming our artists into your living spaces for rehearsals, including:

Tom Benz, Andrea DelGiudice, Melissa Duncan, Simona Ferrara, Rider Foster,
Daniel & Katrina Kennedy, Dr. William & Marla Kennedy, Justin Kirck,
Ashley McGinnis, Joe Russo

OUR CAST & CREATIVE TEAM



Stacey Canterbury



Phoebe Corde



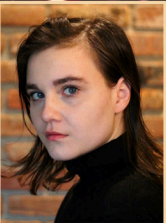
Misha Culver



Christine Duncan



Kayla Faccilongo



Emily Garber



Shira Helena Gitlin



Bea Goodwin



Brendan Hartnett



E.B. Hinnant



Felix Jarrar



Erin Kennedy



Jake Landau



Anna Larranaga



Mark Martinez



Anthime Miller



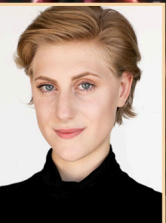
Sophia Mortensen



Aaron Petrovich



Nathan Repasz



Lotus Rogers



Veronica Shea



Steve Valenzuela



Leslie Andrea Williams

ABOUT OUR ARTISTS

Stacey Canterbury (soprano) [she/her] is delighted to again sing with Off-Brand Opera in their inaugural season. She was honored to perform the role of Milky White and Stepmother in *Into the Woods*. From the East Coast to the Rocky Mountains with roles like Micaëla in *Carmen* sung with the Wichita Grand Opera, Elisabeth in Verdi's *Don Carlos* for the Metropolitan Opera Guild and also Center Stage Opera, as Elsa in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* with Opera Pomme Rouge, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* with Opera Theatre of Montclair and Tri-Cities Opera and most recently had the pleasure of originating the role of La Diretrice in Jake Landau's new Opera *Pietà*. She has garnered the praise of critics: "Canterbury unveiled a voice that combined superb purity of tone and breath control... The riveting performance earned her several brava's from an appreciative audience."

Phoebe Corde (dramaturg & writer) [she/her] is a dramaturg, writer, and illustrator from Westport, Connecticut, specializing in stories of the strange, magical, and otherworldly. She is currently Resident Dramaturg at The Civilians, an investigative theater company based in Brooklyn, NY, where she is director of their artistic development group, the R&D Group. She was previously New Work Development Assistant at The Public Theater, where she provided dramaturgical notes and creative support to shows like *Am'è No Mo'*, *Wild Goose Dreams*, and Disney's *Hercules*. She has a BFA in Creative Writing from Connecticut College, where she was awarded the Sally Abrahms Prize in Fiction. phobecorde.wixsite.com

Misha Culver (dancer) [she/her] is originally from Juneau, Alaska where she began her dance training at Juneau Dance Theatre. Misha graduated cum laude from Marymount Manhattan College in NYC with a BFA in Modern Dance. She joined Martha Graham's Second Company: Graham 2, in 2018 under the Direction of Virginie Mécène where she has performed many of Graham's iconic pieces: *Diversion of Angels* and *Appalachian Spring*. Most recently, Misha has performed as a principal dancer for the Des Moines Metro Opera appearing in *Platée* directed by Chas Rader-Shieber, and *Queen of Spades* directed by Matthew Ozawa.

Christine Duncan (mezzo-soprano, deviser, & translator) [she/her] has always been fascinated by the voice and all the different ways it can sound, convey emotion, and tell a story. Christine has trained with the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston and Vermont-based World Folk Ensemble Village Harmony; she has worked with companies

such as Grammy-winning Odyssey Opera/Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Beth Morrison/White Snake Projects, New Amsterdam Opera, The Center for Contemporary Opera, Fresh Squeezed Opera, Astoria Music Festival, and Narnia International Vocal Arts Festival. Christine resides, sings, and maintains a private voice studio in NYC.

christinecjenmoraduncan.com

Kayla Faccilongo (mezzo-soprano & guitarist) [she/her] is a Bronx native vocalist of Puerto Rican descent. Equally at home in the worlds of opera, jazz, & indie folk, her artistry is distinguished by its versatility and originality. This spring, Kayla will premiere the role of Salome in *The Wages of Sin*, a new comedic, Prohibition-era musical by Jed Bolipata. Upcoming highlights also include joining the Dell'Arte Opera Ensemble for their productions of *Pelleas et Mélisande* & the East Coast premiere of *Juana*, as Kayla continues to sing with the Bronx BandA, led by Latin Jazz legend Arturo O'Farrill.

Emily Garber (librettist) [she/her] is a novelist, poet, and librettist of both opera and musical theater. Her diverse array of work draws on her lifelong love of myth and magic, as well as her studies of ancient languages. Emily's new opera & *Aeterna* will be premiered this summer at the Narnia International Vocal Arts Festival.

Shira Helena Gitlin (director) [they/them] is a director, dramaturg, gender consultant, and musical theatre enthusiast. Select directing credits include: *Organic, Theatre: A Love Story* (National Women's Theatre Festival), *7 Rooms...* (Flat Earth Theatre), *Camp Strangewood* (Sparkhaven Theatre), *Shrek: The Musical* (Mohawk Trail Regional School), and *Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Hampshire College). Shira is a graduate of the Arden Professional Apprentice Class 26, was an Artistic Fellow at SpeakEasy Stage Company, and is an alumni of Directors Lab North in Toronto, Canada. BA from Hampshire College in directing and musical theatre studies. For more information, please visit shirahelenagitlin.com.

Bea Goodwin (librettist) [she/her] is a librettist and operatic stage director. Her work has premiered in traditional theatrical spaces such as BAM, La Mama Experimental Theatre, DiMenna Center for Classical Music as well as site specific immersive experiences like the Mount Vernon Gardens, the Mark Hotel penthouse and the Montauk Club. During the pandemic, Bea has written and co-produced two radio plays with Whitney George and two micro-operas with Felix Jarrar. *Six Feet Apart* won the Really Spicy Opera's 48 hour score contest

at the beginning of the stay at home order. For more on this artist: [@asongfrombea](#), [beagoodwin.com](#)

Brendan Hartnett (director & deviser) [he/him] is an accomplished educator, director, and singer. Before moving East, Brendan directed up and down the coast of California with companies including Opera Parallele and Pacific Opera Project. Most recently, he directed *The Yeomen of The Guard* with Ridgewood Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company. Some favorite projects Brendan has led include *The Tragedy of Carmen* with Opera UCLA, *The Arabolies of Liberty Street* and *Xochitl and the Flowers* with Opera Parallele's 'Family Opera' program, and *The Center Cannot Hold* with Pacific Opera Project. Brendan holds an MFA from UCLA's TFT, and a Bachelor's of Music from UC Santa Cruz. [brendanhartnett.com](#)

E.B. Hinnant (tenor & actor) [he/him] is an actor and songwriter from South Carolina now living in New York City. Some favorite credits include Jake in *Clarkston* by Samuel D. Hunter at Boise Contemporary Theater and playing Mr. Sir in *PITS: The Unauthorized 'Holes' Musical* all over NYC. Talk to him about fried okra, televangelists, and Dolly Parton.

Felix Jarrar (composer) [he/him] With music described as "dreamlike" by the Boston Globe, composer/pianist Felix Jarrar's list of accomplishments includes performances at (le) poisson rouge, the BAM! Fisher Hillman Studio, and Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. Amongst his approximately 220 works, he's written over 189 art songs, 12 operas, 2 string quartets, 2 cantatas, and an oratorio. He is the assistant music director for BARN OPERA in Brandon, Vermont and a vocal coach at Mannes School of Music. He completed his Bachelor of Arts at Marlboro College and his Master's of Music degree at Brooklyn College.

Erin Kennedy (soprano, pianist, deviser, & translator) [she/her] is an NYC-based soprano, actor, and pianist dedicated to creating joyful, accessible performances of both contemporary and classic music. Recently, Erin sang the newly-devised role of Angel and covered Musetta with the Light Opera of New Jersey's production of *La Bohème* and appeared in Off-Brand Opera's inaugural production, *Into the Woods*, as the Baker's Wife. This summer she will appear as Belinda in both *Dido & Aeneas* and the world premiere of Jake Landau's companion opera & *Aeterna* at the Narnia International Vocal Arts Festival. [erinkennedysoprano.com](#)

Anna Larranaga (actor) [she/her] is an actor, comedian, and writer from Minneapolis, Minnesota. As an actor she has performed with Lyric Arts, Actors Theatre of Minnesota, The Black Hills Playhouse, and

many more faraway theaters you've never heard of. Anna is also an improviser with training from HUGE Improv Theater and The Upright Citizens Brigade, and is a member of the all-women and non-binary improv team Manners and Misconduct: Improvised Jane Austen. Anna is a founding editor for Minnesota satire site The Nordly and is an associate writer for the podcast Fraudsters.

Jake Landau (composer, pianist, arranger, & translator) [he/him], b. 1995, is a composer from New York City. His own music has been performed by the New York Philharmonic, Houston Grand Opera, the New Albany Symphony, and more in venues such as David Geffen Hall, New York Live Arts Theater, and the Royal Palace of Amsterdam. As a conductor, he has worked with The Narnia Festival, Little Opera Theatre of New York, and Premiere Division Ballet. Jake earned his Bachelor of Music degree under John Corigliano at The Juilliard School and his Master of Studies in Music (Composition) from Oxford University. [jakelandau.com](#)

Mark Martinez (tenor) [he/him] is a tenor in NYC. Outside of Off-Brand Opera, Mark's upcoming performances include Ferrando in *Così fan Tutte*, and Frederick in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Recent roles he has sung include Acis from Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Col Fairfax from Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and Don Ottavio from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Undergrad: Harvard, Grad school: Princeton.

Anthime Miller (cellist) [they/them] is an internationally sought-after composer and performance artist based in Brooklyn. They studied Early Music Performance and Musicology at McGill University and Musical Theater Performance at Circle in the Square Theater School. Anthime is the composer-in-residence for Circle Theater of New York for whom they scored *The Mountain* (New York 2014), which was nominated for Best Original Music at the 2015 New York Innovative Theater Awards. Anthime is also a frequent collaborator with The National Theater of Luxembourg's director Anne Simon, most recently performing and scoring their April 2022 adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard II*.

Sophia Mortensen (mezzo-soprano) [she/her] is based in New Jersey, though her love of music and classical singing began in Washington DC and the Kennedy Center's children's operas. She graduated from the Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College with her Masters in Vocal Performance. She sang the

role of Ljubica in the New York City premiere of Ana Sokolović's chamber opera *Sradba*. She has also sung roles including Tessa in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*; Phoebe in *The Yeomen of the Guard*; Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*; and Siébel in Charles Gounod's *Faust*. Her concert roles include Handel's *Messiah*; Schubert's *Mass in G Major*; and Arthur Honegger's *King David*.

Aaron Petrovich (baritone) [he/him] is very honored to be singing with Off-Brand Opera for the first time. This will also be his New York City solo debut. While living in Chicago, he played the role of Long Tom in the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company production of *Merry England* and the role of Robin Oakapple in the Savoyaires production of *Ruddigore*. Some of his favorite past roles include Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, and Benoît in *La Bohème*. In addition to opera, he regularly performs both operetta and musical theater. This includes his international debut, a staged revue of Bernstein theater pieces, which he performed in Beijing, China at the Peking National Opera House and China Conservatory of Music. During the day, Aaron is a middle school general music and chorus teacher at MS 301.

Nathan Repasz (percussionist) [he/him] is an NYC-based drummer, vocalist, composer, improviser, and music director. He works as a session/pit drummer, choral tenor, voice actor, and goat cheese monger. His solo performance work explores the liminality of sense/nonsense and groove/noise and he frequently collaborates on improvisational music projects and devised theatre. He holds a B.A. in music from Wesleyan University.

Lotus Rogers (mezzo-soprano & actor) [she/they/he/ze] is a Brooklyn based multi-instrumentalist, songwriter, actor, and creative. They are a recent graduate of University of Arizona. Previous regional credits include *The Wolves*, *Richard III*, *Pippin*, and *Kiss Me Kate*. Many thanks to the entire team for their patience and support! For info on upcoming projects check out lotusrogers.com or @lotusjamesrogers on instagram.

Veronica Shea (soprano, director, & translator) [she/her] is an actor, digital marketer, and theatrical producer who is attracted to roles in multiple genres with companies of all sizes. Veronica most recently appeared as Musetta in Light Opera of New Jersey's production of *La Bohème*. Other recent engagements include *The Yeomen of the Guard* (Elsie) and the inaugural Off-Brand Opera production, *Into the Woods* (Cinderella). Upcoming projects include the world premiere of Jake Landau's & *Aeterna* at the Narnia International Vocal Arts

Festival, a double bill of Landau's *Pietà/Suor Angelica* at Axelrod Performing Arts Center, Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Wanda in *Venus in Fur*. veronicashea.com

Steve Valenzuela (baritone) [he/him], a Connecticut native, received his Master of Music degree from Louisiana State University and his bachelor's of music degree from Western Connecticut State University. Opera credits include: Howard in David T. Little's *Dog Days*, Figaro in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, Nick Shadow in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Don Giovanni (*Don Giovanni*), Count (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Marcello (*La Bohème*), Danilo (*The Merry Widow*), and Sam (*Trouble in Tahiti*).

Leslie Andrea Williams (choreographer, movement director, actor, & writer) [she/her] was born in Newport News, Virginia and was raised in Raleigh, North Carolina. Ms. Williams studied at the prestigious Juilliard School in New York City, and graduated with a BFA in Dance. She now is a Principal dancer at the Martha Graham Dance Company, performing featured roles around the world. One of her most notable roles is the lead in Martha Graham's *Chronicle*. In the company's almost 100 year history, Ms. Williams is the first Black woman to ever perform this iconic role. Her performance earned her a mention in The New York Times' "Best Dance of 2019" list. She has also been named in Dance Magazine as a dancer "On the Rise" and in Teen Vogue as a "Rising star Personifying Black Excellence." Ms. Williams' work has been described in reviews as "hypnotic," "larger than life," and she is someone who "effortlessly controls the gaze of the audience."



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.

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Off-Brand Opera



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