



Robert Over

CENTENARY FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2025

WELCOME

Dear friends,

It is with great joy and tremendous humility that I welcome you to the Glenn Korff School of Music at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln for the Robert Owens Centenary Festival. In the short ten years that Robert and I were acquaintances/colleagues/collaborators/friends, he visited this campus four times. At his first visit, we gave a concert on his 82nd birthday, complete with a birthday cake. Robert's final visit in March 2015 was to coach our English translation of his opera, *Culture! Culture!*, which UNL Opera premiered that fall. By that time, Robert was too ill to travel, but he happily watched the recording several times in his last days.

I am grateful that so many of you are here to celebrate Robert's life and music. When I first asked him to be the subject of my doctoral research, he said that he didn't want his music "dissected." I assured him that my purpose was not to dissect his music, but to share it with the world. I am so glad he agreed. And I am delighted that you heard the beauty and profundity of his work so readily apparent to me.

It is bittersweet to host a celebration for the 100th anniversary of Robert's birth at the school he loved so dearly. He said he was pleasantly surprised by the kindness and generosity of our community, as well as the students and faculty. I wish that you have the same experience while you are in Lincoln, and you leave this weekend saying, as he did, "How marvelous!"

I hope that you learn something new about Robert this week; I hope that you hear something that surprises you. I hope that you fall in love with a work you hear for the first time, and I hope that you remember Robert fondly.

And yes, there will be cake.

Thank you for celebrating a wonderful human and gifted artist with me. I am sure Robert is smiling from above.

Jamie Reimer
September 17, 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Owens", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

SPONSORS OF THE ROBERT OWENS CENTENARY FESTIVAL



OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Support for the Robert Owens Centenary Festival was provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Enhancement Program sponsored by the Office of Research and Innovation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



HIXSON-LIED COLLEGE OF FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

This project was made possible, in part, with support from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts' Endowment Fund.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Owens'.

ROBERT OWENS CENTENARY FESTIVAL AT-A-GLANCE

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

9:00 am	Registration	Westbrook Lobby
11:00 am	Recital: Finding His Voice	Westbrook Performance Hall
2:00 pm	Recital: A Season of Song	Westbrook Performance Hall
4:00 pm	Lecture Recital: The Parallel Creative Genius of Robert Owens and Langston Hughes	Westbrook Performance Hall
7:30 pm	Recital: Fields of Wonder	Westbrook Performance Hall

Thursday, September 18, 2025

9:00 am	Recital: Arias from the Archive	Westbrook Performance Hall
11:00 am	Lecture Recital: Understanding the Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar	Westbrook Performance Hall
2:00 pm	Panel Discussion: Robert Owens as Friend, Composer, and Collaborator	Westbrook 116
4:00 pm	Recital: Music for Friends	Westbrook 116
7:30 pm	Concert Reading: <i>Culture! Culture! Premiere of the new chamber orchestra reduction by UNL Opera</i>	Kimball Recital Hall
9:30 pm	Gala Birthday Reception	Kimball Hall Lobby

Friday, September 19, 2025

9:00 am	Robert Owens Archive Exhibit	Westbrook Music Library
11:00 am	Recital: The Last Five Years	Westbrook Performance Hall
2:00 pm	Recital: The New Robert Owens Songbook	Westbrook Performance Hall



Recital One: Finding His Voice

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 | 11:00 am
Westbrook Performance Hall

Welcome

Dr. Felix Olschofka, Director
Glenn Korff School of Music

Program

Thema mit variationen Erinnerungen an Salzkammerzeit, Op. 2

Dedicated to Prof. Grete Hinterhofer

Denis Plutalov, piano

I wandered lonely (Wordsworth), Op. 5*

Dedicated to Marie Peters

Marcia Porter, soprano
Stacie Haneline, piano

Carnival Suite for piano, Op. 7

Dedicated to Dozent Felix Miczoch

Yimeng Xu, piano

3 Songs for a Deep Voice and Piano (Emily Brontë), Op. 18

1. The old stoic
2. Tell me, tell me
3. Sleep brings no joy

Anna DeGraff, mezzo soprano
Richard Fountain, piano

*Included in the new Robert Owens Songbook published by Classical Vocal Reprints.



Ballade, Op. 12

Janka Krajciova, piano

Eindrücke von Robert Hansen ALPHARETTA

Dedicated to Nicolai Baehr aus Starnberg

1. Joy – Allegro
2. Elegy – Melancholy
3. Red Indian Dirge
4. Robert Hansen Marching

Rossitza Jekova-Goza, violin
Mila Abbasova, piano

Californian Sonata, Op. 6

Richard Fountain, piano

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Hansen". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "R" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Recital Two: A Season of Song (1958-1970)

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 | 2:00 pm
Westbrook Performance Hall

Program

Dear Friends and Gentle Hearts (Countee Cullen), Op. 28*

Molly Wanless, soprano
Margot Porter, soprano
Morgan Goad, mezzo soprano
Tanner Engeseth, baritone

Drei Lieder für Mezzosopraan und Klavier (Eichendorff), Op. 19

Die Nacht
Morgendämmerung
Der verliebte Reisende

Daveda Karanas, mezzo soprano
Richard Fountain, piano

Drei Lieder für Bariton und Klavier (Hesse), Op. 20

Fremde Stadt
Eine Geige in den Gärten
Im Nebel

Byron Jones, baritone
Stacie Haneline, piano

4 Motivations, Op. 21

The cottager to her infant (Dorothy Mae Ann Wordsworth)
Hope (William Wordsworth)
A complaint (William Wordsworth)
Could I but ride indefinite (Emily Dickinson)

Cornelius Johnson, tenor
Kaitlyn Rittner, piano



Stanzas for Music (George Gordon Noel Byron, Lord Byron)

Stanzas for Music
When we two parted
Oh! Snatched away in beauty's bloom
So we'll go no more a-roving

Sylvia D. Jones, soprano
Yimeng Xu, piano

Three Countee Cullen Songs, Op. 27

From the Dark Tower
Yet do I marvel
For a poet

Justin Payne, tenor
Stacie Haneline, piano

Drei Lieder für eine tiefe Stimme (Hoffmansthal), Op. 47

1. Vorfrühling
2. Die Beiden
3. Manche freilich...

Allen Henderson, baritone
Richard Fountain, piano

3 Songs for Baritone and Piano (Claude McKay), Op. 41

Composed for Donnie Ray Albert

The lynching
If we must die
To the white fiends

Donnie Ray Albert, baritone
Stacie Haneline, piano

*Included in the new Robert Owens Songbook published by Classical Vocal Reprints.



TRANSLATIONS

Die Nacht

Poem by Joseph von Eichendorff

Nacht ist wie ein stilles Meer,
Lust und Leid und Liebesklagen
Kommen so verworren her
In dem linden Wellenschlagen.

Wünsche wie die Wolken sind,
Schiffen durch die stillen Räume,
Wer erkennt im lauen Wind,
Ob's Gedanken oder Träume? -

Schliess' ich nun auch Herz und Mund,
Die so gern den Sternen klagen,
Leise doch im Herzensgrund
Bleibt das linde Wellenschlagen.

Fremde Stadt

Poem by Hermann Hesse

Wie das so seltsam traurig macht:
Ein Gang durch eine fremde Stadt,
Die liegt und schläft in stiller Nacht
Und mondbeglänzte Dächer hat.

Und über Turm und Giebel reist
Der Wolken wunderliche Flucht
Still und gewaltig wie ein Geist,
Der heimatlos nach Heimat sucht.

Du aber, plötzlich übermannt,
Ergibst dem wehen Zauber dich
Und legst dein Bündel aus der Hand
Und weinst lang und bitterlich.

Der verliebte Reisende

Poem by Joseph von Eichendorff

Da fahr' ich still im Wagen,
Du bist so weit von mir,
Wohin er mich mag tragen,
Ich bleibe doch bei dir.

Da fliegen Wälder, Klüfte
Und schöne Täler tief
Und Lerchen hoch in Lüften,
Als ob dein' Stimme rief.

Night

Translation © by Richard Stokes

Night is like a silent sea,
Joy and pain and lover's laments
Mingle in such confusion
In the gently lapping waves.

Wishes are like clouds,
Sailing through the silent space,
Who can tell in the warm breeze
If they be thoughts of dreams?

Though I now close my heart and lips
That love lamenting to the stars:
Still in the depths of my heart,
The waves pulse gently on.

Foreign City

Translation copyright © by Sharon Krebs

How it makes one so strangely sad:
A walk through an unfamiliar city
That lies there sleeping in the quiet night
And has rooftops glinting with moonlight.

And above the turrets and gables
Travels the wondrous flight of clouds,
As still and vast as a spirit
That, homeless, seeks a home.

You, however, suddenly overcome,
Give yourself over to the painful enchantment
And lay down the bundle from your hand,
And weep long and bitterly.

I travel silently in the coach

Translation copyright © by Emily Ezust

I travel silently in the coach -
you are so far from me -
but wherever it might take me,
I remain still with you.

There fly by forests, gorges
and lovely deep valleys,
and larks high in the sky,
as if your voice were calling.



Die Sonne lustig scheint
Weit über das Revier,
Ich bin so froh verweinet,
Und singe still in mir.

Vom Berge geht's hinunter,
Das Posthorn schallt im Grund,
Mein' Seel' wird mir so munter,
Grüß' dich aus Herzensgrund.

Eine Geige in den Gärten

Poem by Hermann Hesse

Weit aus allen [dunkeln]¹ Tälern
Kommt der süße Amselschlag,
Und mein Herz in stummen Qualen
Lauscht und zittert bis zum Tag.

Lange, mondbeglänzte Stunden
Liegt mein Sehnen auf der Wacht,
Leidet an geheimen Wunden
Und verblutet in die Nacht.

Eine Geige in den Gärten
Klagt herauf mit weichem Strich,
Und ein tiefes Müdewerden
Kommt erlösend über mich.

Fremder Saitenspieler drunten,
Der so weich und dunkel klagt,
Wo hast du das Lied gefunden,
Das mein ganzes Sehnen sagt?

Die Beiden

Poem by Hugo von Hoffmansthal

Sie trug den Becher in der Hand -
Ihr Kinn und Mund glich seinem Rand -,
So leicht und sicher war ihr Gang,
Kein Tropfen aus dem Becher sprang.

So leicht und fest war seine Hand:
Er ritt auf einem jungen Pferde,
Und mit nachlässiger Gebärde
Erzwang er, daß es zitternd stand.

Jedoch, wenn er aus ihrer Hand
Den leichten Becher nehmen sollte,
So war es beiden allzu schwer:

Denn beide bebten sie so sehr,
Daß keine Hand die andre fand
Und dunkler Wein am Boden rollte.

The sun shines merrily
far beyond the area;
I am so happy and so tearful,
and I sing silently inside.

From the mountains, the path goes downward,
the posthorn rings out below;
my soul grows so cheerful
and I greet you from the bottom of my heart.

A violin in the gardens

Translation copyright © by Sharon Krebs

Far from out of all dark valleys
Comes the sweet call of the blackbird,
And, in mute agonies, my heart
Listens and trembles until daybreak.

For long, moonlit hours
My yearning keeps watch,
Suffers from secret wounds,
And bleeds to death into the night.

A violin in the gardens
Rises lamentingly with a softly drawn bow,
And a deep becoming-weary
Comes over me like a redemption.

Unknown string player down there,
Who laments so softly and darkly,
Where did you find the song
That speaks my whole yearning?

The Two

Translation copyright © by Walter Meyer

She carried the tumbler in her hand
(her chin and mouth were level w/ its rim)
Her pace was so light and certain
That not a single drop leapt from the tumbler.

His hand was so easy and firm;
He was riding a young horse,
And with a casual motion
Compelled it to stand still while trembling.

Yet when from her hand
He was supposed to take the light tumbler
It was too heavy for both of them.

For both were shaking so hard
That neither hand found the other
And dark wine rolled on the ground.



Manche freilich...

Poem by Hugo von Hoffmannsthal

Manche freilich müssen drunten sterben
wo die schweren Ruder der Schiffe streifen,
andere wohnen bei dem Steuer droben,
kennen Vogelflug und die Länder der Sterne.

Manche liegen mit immer schweren Gliedern
bei den Wurzeln des verworrenen Lebens,
anderen sind die Stühle gerichtet
bei den Sibyllen, den Königinnen,
und da sitzen sie wie zu Hause,
leichten Hauptes und leichter Hände.

Doch ein Schatten fällt von jenen Leben
in die anderen Leben hinüber,
und die leichten sind an die schweren
wie an Luft und Erde gebunden.

Ganz vergessener Völker Müdigkeiten
kann ich nicht abtun von meinen Lidern,
noch weghalten von der erschrockenen Seele
stummes Niederfallen ferner Sterne.

Viele Geschicke weben neben dem meinen,
durcheinander spielt sie all das Dasein,
und mein Teil ist mehr als dieses Lebens
schlanke Flamme oder schmale Leier.

Some, of course

Translation by Jamie Reimer

Some, of course, must die down below
where the heavy oars of the ships graze,
others dwell at the helm above,
know the flight of birds and the lands of the stars.

Some lie with ever heavy limbs
at the roots of tangled life,
others have their chairs set
with the sibyls, the queens,
and there they sit as if at home,
with light heads and light hands.

But a shadow falls from those lives
into the other lives,
and the light ones are bound to the heavy ones
as if bound to air and earth.

All forgotten peoples' weariness
I cannot dismiss from my eyelids,
nor keep away from the frightened soul
Silent falling of distant stars.

Many destinies weave beside mine,
all existence plays them in confusion,
and my part is more than this life
slender flame or narrow lyre.

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Lecture Recital: The Parallel Creative Genius of Robert Owens and Langston Hughes

Philip J. Rogers, baritone
Yimeng Xu, piano

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 | 4:00 pm
Westbrook Performance Hall

Tearless (Langston Hughes), Op. 9

1. Vagabonds
2. Luck
3. Exits
4. Walls
5. Chippy
6. Dancers
7. Grief
8. Prayer

During this event we will discuss and perform the parallel creative communications of Robert Owens and Langston Hughes within the context of the Tearless, opus 6 song cycle. Both were individually impacted by early and mid-century America Jim Crow laws. Hughes, being a keen observer of the human condition for himself and others throughout the world, took note and translated his observations through his writings, thus eventually publishing those observations in what he entitled, Fields of Wonder. Robert Owens employed his personal understanding of the Hughes insights and adroitly translated that understanding by means of his compositional prowess. When Mr. Hughes heard the performance of Tearless, he is noted to have exclaimed, "Are those my words? They are so powerful set to music!"

This presentation, therefore, will explore the perceptive poetic observations of Langston Hughes in tandem with the poignant musical setting by Robert Owens and present them in the context by which they were so adeptly communicated by these two genius creative artists.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Owens", with a stylized, flowing script.

Recital Three: Fields of Wonder

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 | 7:30 pm
Westbrook Performance Hall

Program

Silver Rain (Langston Hughes), Op. 11

Dedicated to John Caldwell

1. In time of silver rain
2. Fulfillment
3. Night Song
4. Silence
5. Carolina Cabin
6. Songs
7. Sleep

Albert Lee, tenor
Stacie Haneline, piano

Heart on the Wall (Langston Hughes), Op. 14

Dedicated to Mattiwilda Dobbs

1. Heart
2. Remembrance
3. Girl
4. Havana Dreams
5. For dead mimes

Lenora Green, soprano
Traci Hall, piano

Desire (Langston Hughes), Op. 13

1. Desire
2. Dream
3. Juliet
4. Man

Charles Moore, tenor
Kaitlyn Rittner, piano



Stars Over Harlem (world premiere)**

music by Brandon Spencer

Trumpet Player: 52nd Street
Harlem Dance Hall
Dimout in Harlem
Motherland
Communion
Migration
Stars

Jamie Reimer, soprano
Stacie Haneline, piano

Border Line (Langston Hughes), Op. 24

1. Border Line
2. Night: Four Songs
3. Dustbowl
4. Burden
5. One
6. Beale Street
7. Gifts
8. Circles
9. Grave Yard
10. Convent
11. Poppy Flower
12. Gypsy Melodies
13. Montmartre
14. Fragments
15. Desert
16. The End

Jawan Jenkins, baritone
Kaitlyn Rittner, piano

Mortal Storm (Langston Hughes), Op. 29

1. A house in Taos
2. Little song
3. Jaime
4. Faithful one
5. Genius child

Kenneth Overton, baritone
Stacie Haneline, piano

** Soprano Jamie Reimer launched the Langston Hughes Project in 2019 to complete the musical settings of poems from *Fields of Wonder* that composer Robert Owens left unfinished. A central goal of the project was to commission works from emerging African American composers. The first of these, *Words Like Freedom* by Shawn Okpebholo, was completed in 2020, followed by *Fields of Wonder* by B.E. Boykin in 2022. *Stars Over Harlem* by Brandon Spencer marks the third and final installment of the project and receives its world premiere in tonight's performance. This project was made possible, in part, with support from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts' Endowment Fund.



Recital Four: Arias from the Archive

Thursday, September 18, 2025 | 9:00 am
Westbrook Performance Hall

Program

Gefährliche fragen	Daveda Karenas, mezzo soprano Stacie Haneline, piano	from DIE BRILLE (1975)
Für die Heutigen	Nina Evelyn, soprano Allen Henderson, baritone Richard Fountain, piano	from DIE BRILLE (1975)
Im Auftrag sind wir Gesandt das Seher	Ramon Mosate, tenor Denis Plutalov, piano	from DIE BRILLE (1975)
Mein Liebeslied	Allen Henderson, baritone Kaitlyn Rittner, piano	from LISA (undated)
Wir rollen raus hier	Tyrese Byrd, tenor Kaitlyn Rittner, piano	from BILLY BISHOP (1986)
Die Namen auf dem Grabstein	Tanner Engeseth, baritone Denis Plutalov, piano	from BILLY BISHOP (1986)



Wir Schiessen uns nicht in Kanada (Ballade)

from **BILLY BISHOP (1986)**

Alfonzo Cooper, Jr., tenor
Stacie Haneline, piano

Schöne Queen

from **DAS GLAS WASSER (1994)**

Anna DeGraff, mezzo soprano
Yimeng Xu, piano

Ich liebe Dich

from **DAS GLAS WASSER (1994)**

Suna Gunther, mezzo soprano
Allen Henderson, baritone
Yimeng Xu, piano

Up on de mountain

from **SÜDEN (1991)**

West High Singers
Adam Reimer, conductor
Jawan Jenkins, baritone

Ashlie Andres
Allison Garcia
Brooke Hamilton
Athei Majuec
Frankie Miller
Salem Van Roy

Selita Crosby
Katie Keefe
Viktor McKenna
Annika Nelson
Ximena Ortega-Soto
Mia Quint

Carson Boehne
Max Epps
Robert Herechski
Charles Reimer
Patrick Remmert
Isaiah Tenski

Logan Hall
Noah Masters
Matthew Pokorny
Jaron Rains
Isaac Thompson
Wyatt Valek



NOTES & TRANSLATIONS

Notes and translations by Jamie Reimer

DIE BRILLE (THE GLASSES)

The opera takes place in a future country, two or three generations after ours. The birth rate has fallen dramatically. The ruler and dictator of the country is the Seer (trouser role). He invented the glasses, which allow the wearers to see everyone naked under their clothes. Since the glasses were invented, "the (birth control) pill" has been overcome, and the birth rate has begun to rise. It is forbidden to take off your glasses under penalty of death.

"Gefährliche Fragen!"

Seher:

Gefährliche Fragen!

Das Volk begehrt nach Wissen stellt

Fragen nach dem alten Buch,

Vergangenheitswerben,

Traum befangen.

Das Quecksilber gestiegen. Gestiegen?

Die Wolken decken Licht er?

Bedrohliche Zeichen!

Gefährliche Fragen.

Der Augenblick ist da.

Meine Idee, einsam Geboren,

Kann durch die Menge nie Gestalt gewinnen!

Ich allein vorgesehen!

Jetzt ist die Zeit Helena!

Hauptmann Roger, bring' Helena!

Der Seher zeugt ein neues Geschlecht

Zum Werkzeug dien' ihr Helena!

"Dangerous questions!"

The Seer:

Dangerous questions!

The people crave knowledge

Questions about the old book,

Past entities who wove,

Dream self-conscious.

The mercury has risen. Increased?

Does he light up the clouds?

Threatening signs!

Dangerous questions.

The moment is here.

My idea, born lonely,

Can never gain shape through the crowd!

I alone intended!

Now is the time Helena!

Captain Roger, bring Helena!

The seer begets a new generation

Use Helena as a tool!

"Für die Heutigen"

Helena:

Für die Heutigen, Kühlen,

Die nur fühlen, was sie fassen –

Und nur fassen, was sie halten –

Und selbst halten was sie hassen –

Und im Glühen schon erkalten

Lieb' deine Liebe nicht aus!

Ob die Schwäne noch singern,

Ehe sie sterben?

Liebe deine Liebe nicht aus!

O Vater!

Vater:

Mein kleines Mädchen!

Helena:

O Vater, wie schön!

Vater:

Nebel in den Augen?

Das Gesicht ganz schmal?

"For the cold ones"

Helena:

For today's cold ones,

Who only feel what they grasp –

And only grasp what they hold –

And even hold what they hate –

And already grow cold in the glow

Do not love your love out!

Will the swans still sing?

Before they die?

Do not love your love out!

O father!

Father:

My little girl!

Helena:

O father, how beautiful!

Father:

Mist in your eyes?

The face so thin?



Die haut so fein dass man durch sehen kann?

Helena:

Sternenlicht ist dier ins Haar
Gefallen lauter Licht von den Sternen

Vater:

Nicht Sternenlicht nur Frost und Schnee.
Ich habe Galgen gesehen.

Helena:

Nicht, Vater! Ich will es nicht wissen!

Vater:

Nicht wissen wollen ist Sünde!

Helena:

Sünde gibt es nicht mehr,
Vater, wir haben sie überwunden
Die Welt is frei,
Frei von Sünde und Schuld Kraft unserer Brille!

Vater:

Kraft Eurer Brille!

“Im Auftrag sind wir Gesandt das Seher”

Roger:

An Helena das Sehers Dank!
Im Auftrag sind wir Gesandt Helenas Eifer zu lohnen –
Helenas blinden, blinden Eifer zu lohnen,
Für Volk und für Vaterland!
Ihr Einsatrim Dienste der Jugender hellung und mehr noch:
Ihr emsiger, sauberer Fort pflanzungswille wird
ausgezeichnet;
Ausgezeichnet durch die silberne Brille!
So bald es die Embryo Forschung erfordeut,
Wird Helena zum SEHER beordert!

Skin so fine you can see through it?

Helena:

Starlight is in your hair
Fallen all light from the stars

Father:

Not starlight only frost and snow.
I have seen gallows.

Helena:

Don't, father! I don't want to know!

Father:

Not wanting to know is a sin!

Helena:

Sin no longer exists,
Father, we have overcome it
The world is free,
Free of sin and guilt by virtue of our glasses!

Father:

By the power of your glasses!

“We are sent on behalf of the Seer”

Roger:

To Helena the Seer's thanks!
We are sent by order to reward Helena's zeal -
To reward Helena's blind, blind zeal,
For people and country!
Her one and only service of youth enlightenment and more:
Her industrious, clean will to advance is honored;
Honored by the silver glasses!
As soon as embryo research requires it,
Helena is ordered to the SEHER!

LISA appears to be – or was intended to be – a multi-act Singspiel, but other sections have not yet been located.

“Mein Liebeslied geliebte Lisa”

Mein Liebeslied geliebte Lisa,
mein Liebeslied gilt air allein
Parma Padua und Pisa
Will ich es singen winseln und Schrein.
Sonne Mond und den Sternen soll es erklingen
Den ich bin dein
Und du bist mein.

Liebe Lisa, liebste Lisa nichts
und niemand komut dir Gleich

Liebe Lisa, liebste Lisa du bist sanft und gummi weich
Lockender als tausend Geigen
Zärtlich wie ein Engelschor

"My love song, beloved Lisa"

My love song, beloved Lisa,
My love song is for the air alone
Parma, Padua, and Pisa,
I will sing it whimper and shrine.
Let it ring out to the sun, moon and stars
For I am yours
And you are mine.

Dear Lisa, dearest Lisa nothing
and no one is like you

Dear Lisa, dearest Lisa you are gentle and soft
More alluring than a thousand violins
Tender as a choir of angels



Liebe Lisa, liebste Lisa, Gurgelst du.
Gurgelst du mire nachts ins Ohr

Dear Lisa, dearest Lisa, do you coo.
Do you coo in my ear at night

Liebe Lisa, Liebste Lisa due machst keine nacht zur Fron

Dear Lisa, dearest Lisa you don't make a night of it

Liebe Lisa, Liebste Lisa niemals Fragst du:
Schläfst due schon
Alle Welt soll es erfahren
Dass noch Nirgend wann und wo zwei so Glücklich waren
Wie Lisa und ihr Romeo!

Dearest Lisa, dearest Lisa you never ask:
Are you asleep yet
Let the whole world know
That nowhere and nowhere have two been so happy
Like Lisa and her Romeo!

BILLY BISHOP, a piece for two singer-actors that share fifteen different roles, is the true story of Canadian William Avery Bishop, who joined the army and was caught up in the battles of WWI. **BILLY BISHOP** had one run of performances with Owens as one of the two actors, and as the orchestra, in 1986.

"Wir wollen raus hier"

Wir wollen raus hier
Ehrenwort und nichts wie von zu hausefort
wir wollen an die Front.
Das ist für uns der reinste Sport.
Wir Freun uns schon auf den Transport auf los Gents los wir
Gehn an Bord,
Das ist doch Gar Kein reintiger Kreig
Ach was, ach was, ach as.
Das ist doch Gar kein Krieg das ist nur Spass!

"We want to get out of here"

We want to get out of here,
word of honor and nothing like leaving home,
we want to go to the front.
For us this is the purest sport.
We're looking forward to the transport to go
Gents, let's get on board,
That's not a clean mess at all
Oh what, oh what, oh what.
It's not a war at all, it's just fun!

"Die Namen auf dem Grabstein"

Die Namen auf dem Grabstein keiner liest sie mehr. Der aller
letzte flug ist schon so lange her sichter sindweit weg und er
ist allein. Die andern liegen unter diesen stein. ja, ja. Die
andern liegen unter diesen Stein.

"The names on the gravestones"

The names on the gravestone no one reads anymore. The
very last flight was so long ago, the sighted are far away and
he is alone. The others lie under this stone. yes, yes. The
others lie under this stone.

Das Moos darüber wachet von Jahr zu Jahr und keiner denkt
mehr dran was damals mar. Der Stein mit den Namen hat
einen sprung nur die Toten bleiten immer Jung ja, ja. Nur die
Toten bleiben immer Jung (ach ja) mit ein und zwanzig
Jahren starben sie mit einund zwansig Jahren viel zu früh.
Gespenster die du nie vertreibst wenn Ausgerechnet du am
Leben bleibst ja, ja. wenn aus gerehnet du am Leben bleibst.

The moss over it grows from year to year and no one
remembers what happened then. The stone with the names
has a crack only the dead always stay young yes, yes. Only
the dead always stay young (oh yes). At one and twenty
years old they died much too early at one and twenty years
old. Ghosts you'll never banish if you of all people stay alive
yes, yes. if you stay alive for a reason.

Wir alle warer jung wir waren Ahnungslos und über Flandern
war der Himmel wolkenlos und wenn ich daran denke wird
mein Herz so kalt als wär ich hundert zwanzeig denke alt ja,
ja. als...

We were all young we were clueless and over Flanders the
sky was cloudless and when I think of it my heart gets as
cold as if I were a hundred and twenty years old yes, yes.
when...

"Wir Schiessen uns nicht ab in Kanada"

Wir Schießen uns nicht in Kanada
Man trägt zivil man trägt kein Schier Gewehr
Wir Schießen uns nicht ab in Kanada
Die letztete last on ist lange her

"We don't shoot ourselves in Canada"

We don't shoot ourselves in Canada
You wear civilian clothes, you don't carry a Schier rifle
We don't shoot ourselves in Canada
The last was a long time ago



Wir funken keinen Krieg in Kanada
Wir haben dafür kein Talent
Wir schlagen uns nicht Tot in Kanada
Man bringt da niemand um Denman nicht kennt

We are not sparking wars in Canada
We have no talent for that
We don't kill each other in Canada
You don't kill anyone you don't know

Dort ist der Himmel blau
und Groß leer das Land
und ungestüm das Glück.
Sonst letzo ist wie Gar nichts bei uns los
Im Sehnen sich nach keinen zurück

There the sky is blue
and the land is vast and empty
and happiness is wild.
Otherwise there's nothing going on there
No one is longing to return.

Wir fangen keine Kriege an in Kanada.
Da meint es einen mit dem andern Gut
Mit Bomben schneisst kein Mensch in Kanada
Wir schwimmen lieben nicht in Blut

We don't start wars in Canada.
We are good to one another
No one throws bombs in Canada
We don't love swimming in blood

Vom Ahorn träum ich oft in Kanada
Das Nordlicht tanzt in mein im Kopf Ballett.
Zum Sterben wüsste ich in Kanada
Den idealen Platz: mein Bett.

I often dream of maple trees in Canada
The northern lights dance a ballet in my head.
When I die I want to be in Canada
The ideal place: my bed.

DAS GLAS WASSER, set in the court of Queen Anne of England, is about the treacherous glass of water that makes a pair of lovers (Abigail and Arthur) happy, a crooked politician (Bolingbroke) successful, and the power-hungry Duchess of Marlborough powerless. In the early 18th century, England is faced with the decision between war and peace. Queen Anne has no idea about politics and only cares about matters of love. Her first lady-in-waiting, the Duchess of Marlborough, is in charge and in favor of war. Lord Bolingbroke, head of the peace party, tries to turn the tide in his favor by any means necessary. As luck would have it, the Queen and Duchess are in love with the same young captain of the guard, who himself only has eyes for a cunning maid.

DAS GLAS WASSER premiered in Germany in 1994.

“Schöne Queen, arme Queen”

Schöne Queen, arme Queen,
du hast alles nur nicht ihn.
Es bestimmt die Etikette
Jeden Schrill und Tritt genau.
Du bist eine Marionette abet keine Frau.

“Beautiful queen, poor queen”

Beautiful queen, poor queen,
you have everything but him.
It determines etiquette
Every shrill and step precisely.
You are a puppet but not a woman.

Schöne Queen, arme Queen,
du hast alles nur nicht ihn.
Liebe ist das Brot der Armen
wie's schon in der Bibel stent.
O Gott Amor hab Erbarmen
mit der armen Majestät.

Beautiful queen, poor queen,
you have everything but him.
Love is the bread of the poor
like it says in the Bible.
Oh God Cupid have mercy
with her poor majesty.

Owens composed incidental music for **SÜDEN**, a play by Julien Green—the Paris-born American writer who became the first foreign member of the Académie française. Set in South Carolina on the eve of the Civil War, the play explores the tragic fate of a young lieutenant as he becomes increasingly aware of his homosexual desires. The *a cappella* piece “Up on de mountain” appears in Act II, Scene 4. Owens completed the score in 1992, and “Up on the de mountain” was incorporated into the second version of his Spiritual Medley in 2003.



Lecture Recital: Understanding the Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar

Minnita Daniel-Cox, soprano

with

Nina Evelyn, soprano

Kaitlyn Rittner, piano

Thursday, September 18, 2025 | 11:00 am
Westbrook Performance Hall

Images (Paul Laurence Dunbar), Op. 15

1. If
2. No Images
3. The secret

Minnita Daniel-Cox, soprano

Kaitlyn Rittner, piano

3 Songs for Coloratura and Piano (Paul Laurence Dunbar), Op. 31

A song
The secret
A sparrow

Nina Evelyn, soprano

Kaitlyn Rittner, piano



Funding was provided by Humanities Nebraska and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.



Panel Discussion: Robert Owens as Friend, Composer, and Collaborator

Thursday, September 18, 2025 | 2:00 pm
Westbrook 116

Donnie Ray Albert
University of Texas at Austin

Barbara Hill Moore
Southern Methodist University

Darryl Taylor
University of California – Irvine

Louise Toppin
University of Michigan

Moderated by Jamie Reimer
University of Nebraska – Lincoln

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Owens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" on the top line and the last name "Owens" on the bottom line.

Recital Five: Music for Friends

Thursday, September 18, 2025 | 4:00 pm
Westbrook 116

Program

Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 78

Composed for Kathi Kelsh

David Neely, violin
Richard Fountain, piano

Six Negro Spirituals

Arranged for Donnie Ray Albert

1. The Crucifixion
2. You may bury me in the Eas'
3. Po' Mourners got a Home at las'
4. Home in a dat Rock
5. Calvary
6. Go on, Brother

Donnie Ray Albert, baritone
Kaitlyn Rittner, piano

Kopenhagen Sonate, Op. 13

Composed for Dr. Ebbe Markholdr

Denis Plutalov, piano

Romanza II zwischen Geige und Bratsche

David Neely, violin
Clark Potter, viola

I got a home... (arr. Robert Owens)

Molly Wanless, soprano
Sofia Dominguez, mezzo soprano
Jack Carlson, violin
Andrea Alvarado Troncoso, viola
Micah Leary, piano



From the Book of Ruth*

Marcia Porter, soprano
Stacie Haneline, piano

Idomeneo-Quartett (in honor of Mozart's 250th birthday) *Composed for the Munich Composers Organization*

William McMullen, oboe
David Neely, violin
Clark Potter, viola
Karen Becker, cello

A spiritual medley

Dedicated to Barbara Hill Moore

Rachel Green, soprano
Charles Moore, tenor
with
The Papillion-LaVista South Concert Choir
Scott Dugdale and Brian Johnson, conductors
Anne Smith, piano


Liam Bell
Abby Boyce
Jacksen Countryman
Lizzie Dillon
Paige Hermsen
Aurelia Kuchera
Walker Lawrence
Preston Mickey
Kylie Petersen
Caroline Reimer
Lucas Taylor
James Tucker
Johanna Ward
Teddy Wiberg

Paisley Bernth
Rory Boyte
Brady Del Campo
Leo Duhs
Embry Hicks
Lucas Lagman
J'shaun Long
Karsyn Morehead
Jax Poole
Landon Saylor
Lexie Tolman
Gavin Turecek
Abigail Weyermuller
Ava Winkler

Lydia Blair
Barrett Bumsted
Sydney Delong
RJ Fittje
Brody Hike
Asiel Landeros
Sean Marroquin
Carter Nash
Ethan Preston
Ben Schuhmacher
Jacob Tomaszewicz
Peyton Walker
Audrey Wheeler
Azlee Winsick

Rylee Booth
Aaniyah Collins
Saydee Denton
Corbin Hale
Ava Johnson
Madeline Lane
Marah McDougal
Eli Olson
Leah Rathke
Sophie Spence
Jerzie Trudell
Ella Walts
London White
Maiya Yabut

*Included in the new Robert Owens Songbook published by Classical Vocal Reprints.



A concert reading of Robert Owens' comedic opera

Culture! Culture!

Libretto by Vera Prill

English translation by Robert Owens and Jamie Reimer

Chamber orchestration by M. Joseph Willette

Thursday, September 18, 2025 | 7:30 pm
Kimball Recital Hall

ARTISTIC STAFF

Conductor	Tyler Goodrich White
Stage Director	William Shomos
Stage Manager	Ella Young
Lighting Designer	Dean Bressler
Choreographer	Grace Thomsen

CAST, IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Tobias Ansel, a composer	Tanner Engeseth	Waitress	Morgan Goad
Ursula Smith, a music teacher	Molly Wanless	Bar Keeper	Joe Keller
Oswald, Paul's manager	Mason Bruggeman	Young Man	James Rasser
Dodo, Oswald's daughter	Anna DeGraff*	Waiter	Carson Doss
Paul Andal, a singer	Justin Payne	Waitress	Morgan Goad
Mr. Wilcox, a reporter	Sean Heaton	Susie, a young girl	Zayna Corey
Page	Hannah Yohe	Dancers	Chayton Howell
			Megan Marasco

ENSEMBLE

Elly Cheatle Rose	Zayna Corey	Jackson Kissler	Carson Doss
McClelland	Morgan Goad	James Rasser	Sean Heaton
Hannah Yohe	Kayelynn Lawson		Joe Keller

ORCHESTRA

Flute	Brenna Sherman	Trumpet	Nate Collette	Violin I	Ben Jacobsen	Cello	Jennifer Lochhead
Oboe	Ruth Moreno Calderon	Trombone	Aidan Boone	Violin II	Jack Carlson	Bass	Dalton C. Metcalf
Horn	Bradley Greathouse	Piano	Stacie Haneline	Viola	Andrea Alvarado Troncos		

*Guest artist Anna DeGraff appears courtesy of the UNL Friends of Opera.



SYNOPSIS

Act I, Scene 1

Music student Tobias Ansel is in his apartment, where he has composed a new oratorio. As a birthday gift, he plays it for his girlfriend, piano teacher Ursula. Tobias then reveals that he has bought a ticket to hear the famous tenor Paul Andral in concert, hoping the renowned singer will be interested in performing his work.

Act 1, Scene 2

Backstage at the concert hall, Oswald—Paul Andral’s manager—waits nervously for the singer to return after his performance. Tobias arrives with the oratorio score, hoping to speak with Paul. Suddenly, the ambitious Dodo appears, trailed by members of the press. As Paul emerges, he's immediately surrounded by adoring fans and bombarded with reporters’ questions. Feeling overwhelmed, Paul tries to slip away, and Tobias follows him.

Act 1, Scene 3

At the Tango Tango bar, Paul and Tobias sit drunk amid a lively crowd of dancing, laughing couples. They talk about the struggles and rewards of being artists, eventually agreeing that they'd rather escape the pressure of big cities and constant media attention. As they stumble out of the bar together, Tobias unknowingly leaves behind the only copy of his treasured oratorio score.

Act 2, Scene 1

Early the next morning at Paul’s apartment, Paul—still in his tuxedo—sleeps on the couch. Tobias wakes up to the sound of his alarm, reminding him of his first class of the day. Realizing the oratorio score is missing, he panics and rushes out to search for it. Shortly after, Ursula arrives with her young piano student, Susie, for a lesson. Distracted by her earlier argument with Tobias, Ursula is caught off guard when Paul appears. Not recognizing him, she assumes he’s a new student. Tobias then bursts back in, frantic and trying to retrace his steps from the night before—at which point Paul’s identity is revealed.

Act 2, Scene 2

Inside Paul’s hotel suite, Oswald and Dodo are frantically searching for him. The waitress from the Tango Tango bar arrives with Tobias’s lost oratorio score. Moments later, Tobias shows up, surrounded by a crowd of fans. Dodo presses him for information about Paul’s whereabouts. Sensing an opportunity, she and Oswald invite Tobias to play the score for them. When Dodo discovers that Paul and Tobias are planning to leave the city, she offers to organize a preview performance—and insists that Tobias bring Paul with him.

Act 2, Scene 3

In a hotel reception room, Dodo excitedly anticipates the success of Paul’s upcoming American tour. Oswald enters with members of the press and ushers them into the adjoining room. Just then, Ursula arrives looking for Paul but is mistaken for a journalist. Paul and Tobias soon appear, only to be intercepted by Dodo and Oswald. Dodo seductively guides Tobias to the piano, while Oswald steers Paul toward a stack of tour contracts waiting to be signed.

As Tobias begins to play, his music drifts into the press room, catching everyone’s attention. Dodo seizes the moment to reveal to Paul that Tobias is the composer. Meanwhile, Paul and Ursula share a spark of mutual attraction. Recognizing a perfect opportunity, Dodo invites Ursula to join the tour—and proposes that she represent Tobias as his manager. The press hails Tobias as the next great composer.



CULTURE! CULTURE! PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Dean Bressler (Lighting Designer) is a second-year MFA candidate in Lighting Design at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. With over a decade of experience in the world of theatre, Dean has worked in a variety of roles, including lighting design, sound design, and directing, giving him a well-rounded understanding of the creative process. His passion for design is matched only by his commitment to education. Dean is deeply invested in mentoring and inspiring the next generation of theatre students, sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm for the craft. Whether behind the scenes or in the classroom, he strives to create experiences that elevate the art form and foster a collaborative, innovative environment for his peers and students alike.

Elly Cheatle (Ensemble) is a second-year student from Elkhorn studying Vocal Performance and English. She is a member of Kappa Delta Sorority and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Honors Program. She has previously been in the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Summer Musical Theatre Academy's productions of *Fame* as Serena Katz, *Footloose* as Vi Moore, and *Legally Blonde* as part of the ensemble. This is her first production with the university, and she is very thankful to her family and friends for their support throughout the audition and rehearsal processes.

Zayna Corey (Young Girl/Ensemble) is a second-year vocal music education and music technology student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She participated in opera scenes last semester and has been performing vocal music for all her life. Zayna is also involved in the student-led a cappella group "Take Note", where she serves as the assistant music director. She will be a part of the ensemble in this fall's production of *Hansel and Gretel*. She is very excited to sing in this performance of *Culture!*

Dr. **Anna DeGraff** (Dodo) is an instructor of applied voice and music history at South Dakota State University. She holds undergraduate degrees in music and psychology from the University of Nebraska and graduate degrees in vocal performance from the University of Minnesota. A versatile mezzo soprano, her credits include such varied roles as Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), and Ado Annie (*Oklahoma!*). A strong proponent of contemporary music, she has participated in several workshops and premieres of works by living composers such as Robert Aldridge, Herschel Garfein, Jocelyn Hagen, Kurt Knecht, and Lisa Neher. Anna has won the NATS Nebraska Artist Award and was the recipient of the 2014 Stratton Fellowship for a cultural exchange in Switzerland. Her professional affiliations include memberships in Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Alpha Iota, Golden Key Society, and Pi Kappa Lambda.

Tanner Engeseth (Tobias Ansel) is a baritone from De Forest, WI. He is currently a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, studying under Dr. Jamie Reimer. Recent engagements include *Marquis de la Force* in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* with UNL Opera, *Melchior* in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with UNL Opera, and *Dandini* in *La Cenerentola* with FIO Italia. He is a regional finalist of the West Central NATS Chapter and has previously won first place in his category at the State NATS level in Wisconsin. Tanner also has a Music Education degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Morgan Goad (Waitress/Ensemble) is a master's student in Vocal Performance at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, hailing from Hillsboro, MO. With a unique blend of artistic interests, she holds both a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a Bachelor of Science in Advertising from Southeast Missouri State University. A passionate performer and composer, Morgan thrives on stage, blending her love for music with a deep creativity that extends to the visual arts. Outside of music, she enjoys spending time outdoors, reading a good book, and unwinding with a good video game. Her diverse skills and broad artistic vision set her apart, combining the precision of her vocal training with the imagination and storytelling found in her creative pursuits. With a commitment to growth and innovation in both performance and composition, Morgan is eager to bring fresh, bold perspectives to the world of music.

Sean Heaton (Mr. Wilcox/Ensemble) is a 3rd year Music Education student from Clay Center, Nebraska, studying under Bill Shomos. Sean has performed in the last two years of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with UNL opera and placed 3rd in his category at the West Central Regional NATS competition this past November. He has also been known to play trombone for UNL's show choir, Big Red Singers, and most recently took up learning bass guitar to play for the All-State show choir at Peru State University. Sean sincerely wishes that you enjoy the performance as much as he does.



Chayton Howell (Dancer) is a student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, specializing in Dance studies and business. With 13 years of dance experience, he has been in 2 musicals and won multiple awards as a competition dancer. Also, he has been working as a stagehand at a company in Las Vegas, setting up stages, video walls, and music equipment. Outside of work, he enjoys building Legos, shoes, going on adventures, and camping.

Joe Keller (Bar Keeper/Ensemble) is a 2nd year Music Education student with an emphasis in Voice. At UNL, Joe is a member of NAFME (National Association for Music Education) and ACDA (American Choral Directors Association). Joe hopes that you enjoy our performance of Culture! Culture!

Jackson Kissler (Ensemble) is a fifth-year vocal performance major studying at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln under Dr. Jared Hiscock. He has been seen in UNL Opera's production of Dialogues of the Carmelites in 2024, Opera Scenes 2025, and will appear this fall as The Witch in UNL Opera's production of Hansel and Gretel. He has previously attended the Singing Down the Barriers Institute and has a passion for singing music by minority composers in his personal and academic studies. He is so excited to be a part of this performance of Culture! Culture! and looks forward to sharing this story with the audience!

Kayelynn Lawson (Ensemble/Dodo cover) is delighted to make her performance debut at UNL, where she is currently pursuing a master's degree in Vocal Performance. She holds a B.A. in Music with an emphasis in Vocal Performance from Bethany Lutheran College. Favorite roles include the Queen of the Fairies (Iolanthe) and the Robber Queen (The Snow Queen) at Bethany Lutheran College, as well as the Baker's Wife (Into the Woods) with Broadway Theatre Arts Academy.

Megan Marasco (Dancer) is a second-year dance major in the Glenn Korff School of Music as well as a business minor and a university honors student. On campus, I am a marketing intern for the Lied Center and a residence assistant. I have 14 years of dance training, and some recent projects I've worked on include the Lied Center's Annual Gala as well as performing and choreographing for the first annual Omaha Jazz Dance Ensemble showcase. This is her first opera, and she is honored to be part of this experience.

Rose McClelland (Ensemble) is a fourth-year vocal performance and biological sciences student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has performed yearly in UNL's Fall opera productions, Opera Scenes, and Galas. She will perform in this Fall's production of Hansel and Gretel, as Mother. She competes yearly at NATS, qualifying for the National quarterfinals in 2025. She has studied abroad in various young artist programs, most recently at the "Blas" Irish Traditional Music summer course at the University of Limerick. She is thrilled to have the opportunity to sing in Culture! Culture! and help bring such an important story to life.

Justin Payne (Paul Andal) is a classically trained tenor, composer, and playwright from Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to collaborating with Dani Cleveland on Heaven Come Home and Little Brown Boy, Justin composed music for The Draft with playwright Lisa Harrison. One of Justin's newest creations is Belle Terre the Musical, a whimsical story that sends an adolescent young woman on a journey to self-discovery with music inspired by the New Orleans brass band style. Justin currently performs as the tenor soloist for Handel's Messiah with the Voices of Omaha, in addition to having sung on stages in Austria, Italy, and China. Justin has also enjoyed music directing for several plays and new musicals, including Dreamgirls, Giraffes Can't Dance, 3 Little Birds, Into the Woods, and Spunk! He holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Nebraska Omaha, a Master of Music from Michigan State University, and is pursuing a doctoral degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

James Rasser (Young Man/Ensemble) is a 3rd-year student studying Vocal Performance (B.A) on the Pre-Law and Honors track with minors in Dance and Music Technology. He's been involved in several productions at UNL, including Urinetown (Bobby Strong) and Dialogues des Carmélites (1st Commissioner). Other notable involvements and accomplishments include winning the Music Theatre and Classical categories at the West Central Regional NATS competition, as well as music directing the UNL Bathtub Dogs. He would like to thank Dr. Jamie Reimer for her mentorship and support, his family and siblings for their love, and his dogs, of course. Enjoy the show! @james_rasser05



William Shomos (Director) is the Richard H. Larson Distinguished Professor of Music (Voice) and Director of Opera at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. There, he has staged a wide variety of productions ranging from traditional fare (*The Marriage of Figaro*, *La Bohème*) to world premieres and new works such as *O Pioneers!* (White), *Dead Man Walking* (Heggie), and *A Wedding* (Bolcom). His staging of Tyler White's *O Pioneers!* received regional and national acclaim and was aired on Nebraska Educational Television (NETV). One of his most cherished projects has been the stage direction of the world premiere of Tyler White's second full-length opera, *The Gambler's Son*, based on a novel by Nebraskan author Mari Sandoz and the life of Nebraskan painter Robert Henri (view YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFTBr4BZBxk&t=1572s>). His productions of *Dead Man Walking*, *Così fan tutte* and *Street Scene* won first place in the National Opera Association's Opera Production Competition. Shomos has staged several works with Pensacola Opera, Nevada Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Muddy River Opera Company, Opera Omaha, and La Musica Lirica in Novafeltria, Italy.

Grace Thomsen (Choreographer) is so excited to be choreographing for Culture! Culture! This is incredibly rewarding, especially as a recent graduate of the UNL Dance Program. She began dancing at Dance Inspiration Studio in Omaha, Nebraska and continued to explore her love of dance at UNL. Here, she found community, choreographed, and performed with the best group of artists. As a student, she had the honor of performing in and choreographing works for Student Dance Project, Evenings of Dance, Orchestis UNLeashed, and the ACDA stage. She began dancing and performing with the UNL Ballroom Dance Company while in school as well, and here she found another genre of dance she loved. Grace is so excited to be working with UNL Dance Program dancers once again and is so grateful for the opportunity.

Molly Wanless (Ursula Smith) is a soprano from Milton, Wisconsin. Molly is currently pursuing a Master of Music in vocal performance with Dr. Jamie Reimer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Recent engagements include Sister Constance from *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and the titular role from *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with UNL Opera. She most recently performed with the Varna Music Academy as Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. Molly has a B.M. in Vocal Performance from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, where she studied with Brian Leeper.

Tyler G. White (Conductor) has been Director of Orchestras at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln since 1994 and a member of the composition faculty at UNL since 1996. Before coming to Nebraska, White led orchestras at Cornell University and Trinity University (Texas). In 2004, he was a guest lecturer in conducting at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China, and in September 2007 he was named Best Musical Director at the Waterford International Festival of Light Opera in Waterford, Ireland. Recent seasons have seen additional guest conducting engagements in Mexico, Brazil, and China. He has also been Resident Conductor of Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra (2000-2019) and from 2019 to 2023 served as the orchestra's first Composer-in-Residence. In April 2023, he was named Artistic Director/Conductor of the Hastings Symphony. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, he earned his master's and doctoral degrees in composition from Cornell University, studying with Pulitzer Prize-winners Steven Stucky and Karel Husa. He has also studied at the University of Copenhagen (Denmark) and the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau (France).

Hannah Yohe (Page/Ensemble) is a third-year Vocal Performance and Pre-Law Major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her past performances with UNL Opera include *Dialogues of the Carmelites* (Nun Chorus) and *O Pioneers!* (Chorus), and she is overjoyed to be portraying the role of Gretel in UNL's production of *Hansel and Gretel* later this fall. She has also participated in productions of *Urinetown* (Hope Cladwell) and *Big Fish* (Jenny Hill) at Nebraska Repertory Theatre. In her free time, she enjoys performing with her a cappella group (Boots & Cats), trying out new recipes, and indulging in a good book.

Ella Young (Stage Manager) is a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is a student of Dr. Bill Shomos. Recent projects include the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Due Donne* in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Soo Opera. She recently stage-managed Student Dance Project and Evenings of Dance for UNL Dance and directed an opera scene at UNL. She is very excited to continue working with UNL Opera in this celebration of Robert Owens.



Recital Six: The Last Five Years

Friday, September 19, 2025 | 11:00 am
Westbrook Performance Hall

Program

Rimbaud Cabaret, Op. 101

Composed for Darryl Taylor

1. Le Dormeur du val - Asleep in the Vale
2. Au Cabaret-Vert - The Green Cabaret
3. Rages de Césars - The Emperor's Rage
4. Rêvé pour l'hiver - A Winter's Dream

Darryl Taylor, countertenor
Stacie Haneline, piano

Three Dialogues for Flute and Piano

- I. Romance
- II. Lied
- III. Tarantella

John Bailey, flute
Christopher Marks, piano

4 Sonnets to Duse (Sara Teasdale), Op. 102

Composed for Jamie Reimer

1. To Eleonora Duse in "The Dead City"
2. To a picture of Eleonora Duse in "The Dead City"
3. To a picture of Eleonora Duse in "The Dead City"
4. To a picture of Eleonora Duse in "Francesca da Rimini"

Jamie Reimer, soprano
Stacie Haneline, piano



Two songs for mezzo soprano and cello (Rumi), Op. 120

Composed for Crissman Taylor

- I. I am part of the load
- II. Drum sound rises on the air

Amy Guevara, soprano

Karen Becker, cello

Four songs for mezzo soprano and viola (Rumi), Op. 121

Composed for Crissman Taylor

- I. The Lame Goat
- II. A Craftsman
- III. Humble Living
- IV. Wax

Melissa Joy Britton, mezzo soprano

Clark Potter, viola

The Mouse and the Camel (Rumi), Op. 122

Suna Gunther, mezzo soprano

Clark Potter, viola

Karen Becker, cello

Richard Fountain, piano

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Owen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

TRANSLATIONS

Le Dormeur du val

Poem by Arthur Rimbaud

C'est un trou de verdure où chante une rivière
Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons
D'argent ; où le soleil, de la montagne fière,
Luit : c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.

Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue,
Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,
Dort ; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,
Pâle dans son lit vert où la lumière pleut.

Les pieds dans les glaïeuls, il dort. Souriant comme
Sourirait un enfant malade, il fait un somme :
Nature, berce-le chaudement : il a froid.

Les parfums ne font pas frissonner sa narine ;
Il dort dans le soleil, la main sur sa poitrine
Tranquille. Il a deux trous rouges au côté droit.

Au Cabaret-Vert

Poem by Arthur Rimbaud

Depuis huit jours, j'avais déchiré mes bottines
Aux cailloux des chemins. J'entrais à Charleroi.
– Au Cabaret-Vert : je demandai des tartines
De beurre et du jambon qui fût à moitié froid.

Bienheureux, j'allongeai les jambes sous la table
Verte : je contemplai les sujets très naïfs
De la tapisserie. – Et ce fut adorable,
Quand la fille aux tétons énormes, aux yeux vifs,

– Celle-là, ce n'est pas un baiser qui l'épeure ! –
Rieuse, m'apporta des tartines de beurre,
Du jambon tiède, dans un plat colorié,

Du jambon rose et blanc parfumé d'une gousse
D'ail, – et m'emplit la chope immense, avec sa mousse
Que dorait un rayon de soleil arriéré.

Asleep in the Vale

Translation by Camille Chevalier

It's a green hollow, where a river is singing
Crazily hanging on the grasses rags
Of silver; where the sun, from the proud mountain,
Is shining: it's a little valley bubbling with sunlight.

A young soldier, his mouth open, his head bare,
And the nape of his neck bathing in cool blue watercress,
Is sleeping; he is stretched out on the grass, under the skies,
Pale in his green bed where the light falls like rain.

Feet in the gladiolas, he is sleeping. Smiling like
A sick child would smile, he takes a nap:
Nature, rock him warmly: he is cold.

Fragrances do not make his nostrils quiver;
He sleeps in the sun, hand on the breast,
Peacefully. He has two red holes in his right side.

The Green Cabaret

Translation by A. S. Kline

For eight days, I'd ripped up my boots
On the road stones. I'd made Charleroi.
– At the Green Inn: I ordered bread
Buttered, along with half-cold ham.

Happy, I stretched my legs out under the table,
A green one: considering the naïve prints
On the walls. – And it was charming,
When the girl with big tits and lively eyes,

– That one, just a kiss wouldn't scare her! –
Smiling, brought me slices of bread and butter,
With lukewarm ham on a colored platter,

Ham, white and pink, a fragrant garlic clove,
– And filled a huge beer mug high, its foam
Turned by a ray of late sunlight to gold.



Rages de Césars

Poem by Arthur Rimbaud

L'homme pâle, le long des pelouses fleuries,
Chemine, en habit noir, et le cigare aux dents:
L'Homme pâle repense aux fleurs des Tuileries
– Et parfois son oeil terne a des regards ardents...

Car l'Empereur est soûl de ses vingt ans d'orgie !
Il s'était dit : » Je vais souffler la liberté
Bien délicatement, ainsi qu'une bougie ! «
La liberté revit ! Il se sent éreinté !

Il est pris. – Oh ! quel nom sur ses lèvres muettes
Tressaille ? Quel regret implacable le mord ?
On ne le saura pas. L'Empereur a l'oeil mort.

Il repense peut-être au Compère en lunettes...
– Et regarde filer de son cigare en feu,
Comme aux soirs de Saint-Cloud, un fin nuage bleu.

Rêvé pour l'hiver

Poem by Arthur Rimbaud

L'hiver, nous irons dans un petit wagon rose
Avec des coussins bleus.
Nous serons bien. Un nid de baisers fous repose
Dans chaque coin moelleux.

Tu fermeras l'oeil, pour ne point voir, par la glace,
Grimacer les ombres des soirs,
Ces monstruosité hargneuses, populace
De démons noirs et de loups noirs.

Puis tu te sentiras la joue égratignée...
Un petit baiser, comme une folle araignée,
Te courra par le cou...

Et tu me diras : » Cherche ! » en inclinant la tête,
– Et nous prendrons du temps à trouver cette bête
– Qui voyage beaucoup...

Rage of The Caesars

Translation by A. S. Kline

The pale Man walks through the flowery scene,
Dressed in black, a cigar between his teeth:
The pale Man thinks of the flowers of the Tuileries
And sometimes his fishlike-eye grows keen...

The Emperor's drunk with his twenty-year orgy!
He said to himself: 'I'll snuff out Liberty
As if it were a candle, and so delicately!'
Liberty revives! He feels himself exhausted!

He's in prison. – Oh! What name is it that trembles
On his mute lips? What relentless regret does he feel?
No one will ever know. The Emperor's eye's dark.

He recalls the 'Accomplice', perhaps, in spectacles...
Watching a thin wreath of smoke steal,
As on those Saint-Cloud evenings, from his cigar.

A Winter Dream

Translation by A. S. Kline

In winter we'll travel in a little pink carriage
With cushions of blue.
We'll be fine. A nest of mad kisses waits
In each corner too.

You'll shut your eyes, not to see, through the glass,
Grimacing shadows of evening,
Those snarling monsters, a crowd going past
Of black wolves and black demons.

Then you'll feel your cheek tickled quite hard...
A little kiss, like a maddened spider,
Will run over your neck...

And you'll say: "Catch it!" bowing your head,
– And we'll take our time finding that creature
– Who travels so far...



Recital Seven: The New Robert Owens Songbook

Friday, September 19, 2025 | 2:00 pm
Westbrook Performance Hall

Program

Elisabeth (Hesse)
Landstreicherherberger (Hesse)

Lauren Harris Wright, soprano
Yimeng Xu, piano

Shakespeare Song (Kishon)

Byron Jones, baritone
Richard Fountain, piano

Stumm nur

Alfonzo Cooper, Jr., tenor
Yimeng Xu, piano

Wiegenlied für Serafina

Evangeline Juliana Mason, soprano
Denis Plutalov, piano

Deep River, arr. Robert Owens

Jawan Jenkins, baritone
Yimeng Xu, piano

Amazing Grace

Talea CMS Bloch, soprano
Yimeng Xu, piano



What lips my lips have kissed (Millay)
Euclid alone (Millay)

Composed for Darryl Taylor

Albert Lee, tenor
Kaitlyn Rittner, piano

Traum, Op. 22 (R. Roeder)

- I. Heisser Sommerlach atem
- II. Wenn du über, die Wiesen
- III. Kindheitsberg wird zum Hügel meiner selbst
- IV. In meinen Träumen
- V. Wenn ich am Morgen erwache

Cherry Duke, mezzo soprano
Yimeng Xu, piano

Three Songs for baritone and piano (Edgar Allen Poe), Op. 14

1. A dream within a dream
2. To one in paradise
3. Eldorado

Kenneth Overton, baritone
Stacie Haneline, piano

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Overton". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "R" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

TRANSLATIONS

Elisabeth

Poem by Hermann Hesse

Ich soll erzählen,
Die Nacht ist schon spät -
Willst du mich quälen,
Schöne Elisabeth?

Daran ich dichtetw
Und du dazu,
Meine Liebesgeschichte
Ist dieser Abend und du.

Du mußt nicht stören,
Die Reime verwehn.
Bald wirst du sie hören,
Hören und nicht verstehn.

Shakespeare Song

Text by E. Kishon

Die Welt ist eine Shakespeare
bühne eine Welt
Drauf wird das Spiel von Schuld und Sühne
auf Tod und Leben vor gestellt.

Und es folgt dem bunten Spiele
Das Geneigte Publikum
Einmal lachend einmal weinend
Einmal vor entsetzen Stumm.

Das Spiel von jenen Grossen Tieren
Die auf der Jagd nach Geld und Macht,
Die Krone und den Kopf verlieren
Die weil der Norr da rüher lacht!

Zu Bergen türmen sich die Tore
Und nach dem zärtlichsten Gedicht
Reisst schon der Rüpel wieder zoten
Und grinst ins Grelle Rampenlicht

So soll es, und so es.
und so soll es ja auch sein.

Und Gaukel spiel der Komödianten
Stellt Schrecklich sich und wunderbar
Der Mensch in seinen Varianten
Und seinen Widersprüchen dar.

Elisabeth

Translation by Sharon Krebs

I am to tell stories,
The night is already far advanced-
Do you wish to torture me,
Lovely Elizabeth?

That upon which I am creatively engaged
And you in addition,
My love story
Is this evening and you.

You must not disturb me,
The rhymes are being wafted away.
Soon you shall hear them,
Hear them and not understand them.

Shakespeare Song

Translation by Jamie Reimer

The world is a Shakespearean stage,
The world is a stage.
On it, the play of crime and punishment,
A matter of life and death, is presented.

And following the colorful play
Is the affable audience
Sometimes laughing, sometimes crying,
Sometimes silent with horror.

The play of those great beasts,
Who, in pursuit of money and power,
Lose the crown and their heads,
Because the fool laughs first!

The fools pile up to mountains,
And after the tenderest poem,
The bully is cracking dirty jokes again,
And grins into the glaring spotlight.

So it should be, and so it is.
And so it should be.

And the comedians' amusement
Presents itself, horrifying and wonderful,
Man in all his variations,
And his contradictions.



So soll es, und so es.
und so soll es ja auch sein.

Im manchmal Klupft es sich die Schenkel
Manchmal macht das Spiel ihm Pein,
Sich erkennend wie im Spiegel
Sieht er dies und jenes ein.

Da Kommen Könige und Diebe
Ein säufer, ein verliebter Mohr
Und Nackter Hass und wahre Liebe
Dicht Neben Glück und wahn sinn vor.

So soll es, und so es.
und so soll es ja auch sein.

Und höchster Lust wird tiefe Trauer
Aus Liebenden ein Ehepaar
Was süß gewesen ist wird sauer
Und läppisch was erhaben war

In so sieht sich auf der Bühne
Das geneigte Publikum
Eigentlich genau genommen
Immernach sich selber um

So war es, ja so ist es.
Und so soll es ja auch sein.

Stumm nur

Text unknown

Stumm nur, ganz Stumm nur,
Weht Liebe aus Deinem Schlafenden Mund.
Wagt kein Wort, singt kein Lied
Stirbt fast dort weht hinaus du Weisst den Grund,

Heimlich macht Trauer
sich breit' in deinen ängstlichen Traum.
Spricht und Tod, singt um Krieg
Stirb auf dort hängt dann weit im dunklen Raum.

Wiegenlied für Serafina

Text unknown

Serafina! Liebes Kind.
Du Guxkst so **schön**.
Deine Äugelein Glänzen.
Was due wohl denkst?
Was willst due uns sagen?
Serafina, Desirée du bist unsre Schatz!
Schlaf ein!

So it should be, and so it is.
And so it should be.

Sometimes he slaps his thighs.
Sometimes the play causes him pain.
Recognizing himself as if in a mirror,
He sees this and that.

Here come kings and thieves.
A drunkard, a lovesick Moor.
And naked hate and true love
Stand side by side with happiness and truth.

So it should be, and so it is.
And so it should be.

And highest joy turns into deep sorrow.
Lovers become a married couple.
What was sweet turns sour.
And what was sublime becomes silly.

And as it is on the stage,
the appreciative audience
Actually, strictly speaking,
Always sees themselves.

So it was, yes, so it is.
And so it should be.

Silent only

Translation by Jamie Reimer

Silent, completely silent,
Love exhales from your sleeping mouth.
Dares not a word, sings not a song,
It almost dies as it exhales, you know.

Secretly sadness
spreads into your anxious dream.
It speaks and death, sings of war
Dies there then hangs in the dark room.

Lullaby for Serafina

Translation by Jamie Reimer

Serafina! Dear child.
You look so beautiful.
Your little eyes are shining.
What do you think?
What do you want to tell us?
Serafina, Desirée, you are our treasure!
Go to sleep!



Heisser Sommerlach atem*Poem by R. Roeder*

Heisser Sommerlach atem Ruht um uns.
Ich liege im klingenden Gras und sehe dich kommen.
Aber du lächelst anders als ich;
Der Rhythmus, der dich treibt, ist mir fremd.
Deinen Augen gibt die sonner nur Licht
Ich aber habe die Wärme in ihr Gefund en bin in sie
Gebettet.
Ich freue mich dir entgegen.
Und mie Atem vermögen,
Dein Lächeln, Traumlachen zu warmen.

Wenn du über*Poem by R. Roeder*

Wenn du über, die Wiesen meiner Phantasie Gehst singen
die Blumen;
Wenn du durch die Nacht meiner Träume gehst wird sie hell.
Wenn die Sonne auf deinem blauen Mantel ihre Muster
webt,
Tanzen die Wolken am Himmel und die Vögel singen ihre
Hymnen dir zu Ehr.
Ich sehne mich.
Meine Augen suchen die Tiefe deiner Grauklaren Bergseen.
Lass sie erstrahlen und versenge mich mit ihrem kühlen
Schimmer.

Kindheitsberg wird zum Hügel meiner selbst*Poem by R. Roeder*

Kindheitsberg wird zum Hügel meiner selbst.
Wellengrösse, die dem Auge droht,
Netzet kühl im Abendrot meine Seele leis'.

Mond, der Traum gefährte aus den Jugendtagen is mir
fremd geworden.
Und die seinen Weg bereiten
Sternenstaub or seine Füsse legen,
Such' ich nicht mehr zu erfragen.

Müde Ruh' ich aus,
Lege meine Augen in ein Blumendach,
Sende meine Seele in dein blaues Haus
Und werd' nie mehr wach.

Wenn ich am Morgen erwache*Poem by R. Roeder*

Wenn ich am Morgen erwache,
Träume ich noch von den Baumwipfeln
die dir Schatten spenden.
Träume noch von den Häuser wänden,
Die deinen Schatten auf Fangen,
Und ich Neide es ihnen.

Hot summer air*Translation by Jamie Reimer*

Hot summer air rests around us.
I lie in the sounding grass and see you coming.
But you smile differently than I do;
The rhythm that drives you is foreign to me.
The sun only gives light to your eyes
But I have found the warmth in it, I am embedded in it.
I look forward to meeting you.
And I can breathe,
To warm your smile, your dream laughter.

When you walk*Translation by Jamie Reimer*

When you walk across the meadows of my imagination, the
flowers sing;
When you walk through the night of my dreams, it becomes
bright.
When the sun weaves its patterns on your blue mantle,
The clouds dance in the sky and the birds sing their hymns in
your honor.
I long for you.
My eyes seek the depth of your clear gray mountain lakes.
Let them shine and scorch me with their cool shimmer.

The childhood mountain becomes the hill of myself*Translation by Jamie Reimer*

The childhood mountain becomes the hill of myself.
Sizable wave that threatens the eye,
Catch my soul softly in the sunset.

The moon, the dream of my youthful days, has become a
stranger to me.
And those who prepare its path
Lay stardust at his feet,
I no longer seek to inquire.

Wearily I rest,
Lay my eyes in a canopy of flowers,
Send my soul to your blue house
And never wake again.

When I wake up in the morning*Translation by Jamie Reimer*

When I wake up in the morning,
I still dream of the treetops
That give you shade.
Still dreaming of the walls of the houses,
That catch your shadow,
And I envy them.



Wie glücklich die Goldenen Strahlen der Sonne,
Die dir Wärme
Gebem die Wasser,
Wenn sie deinen Durst löschen
Eines Tages werde zu Wasser ich mich wandeln und mich
Kühl wärmend über dich legen.
Dann wirst du mich nicht erkennen,
Aber meine Seele wird bei dir sein,
Die deine küssen und du wirst zu singen beginnen.

How happy the golden rays of the sun,
That give you warmth.
The waters,
when they quench your thirst.
One day I'll turn to water and lie cooling over you.
Then you will not recognize me,
But my soul will be with you,
It will kiss yours and you will begin to sing.

*Robert
Dover*

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Mila Abbasova is a professor of Class Piano and Music Theory at West Texas A&M School of Music, Canyon, TX. Mila came to the USA from Baku, Azerbaijan. Mila Abbasova has been part of the International Music world over 50 years. She began studying music at age 8. She received a Diploma from the Azerbaijanian Government School of Music with Post-Master's Degree in Piano Performance and Music Theory (Baku, Azerbaijan). Mila studied with the famous Azerbaijani musicologist Nailja Nazirova. Her experience includes Concert Master of Chamber Trio, Chair of Chamber Trio, and Music Director. In 1990-1996, she worked as a Principal of the School of Music, Art & Dance (Belarus). In 1993, she won a prestigious award in an International Music Competition for the Belarus Ministry of Music Culture (Minsk, Belarus). In 1996, due to political conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, she and her family immigrated to the United States as political refugees. She has served WTAMU and the Amarillo and Canyon area as a prolific accompanist performing in more than a thousand faculty recitals, solo recitals and student recitals, musicals, and operas. She has also worked as a music director, orchestra conductor, vocal coach, and staff accompanist for Amarillo College Theatre School, Amarillo Opera, Amarillo Little Theatre, Amarillo College Music Department, Summer Youth Musical, and Amarillo College Experimental Theatre. Mila is the founder of the Russian Music Festival from 2017- 2021. She has lived in Amarillo since 1996 with her husband Emin, an artist. They have two sons, Mikail, a professor of Chemistry and Research, and Magerram, an artist and designer. Mila and Emin have six grandchildren. Mila likes to cook her favorite borch and baklava.

Louisiana native and Louisiana State University graduate, **Donnie Ray Albert** began his operatic career after completing a Master of Vocal Performance degree from Southern Methodist University in 1975, where he studied with Bruce Foote and Thomas Hayward. Mr. Albert has been Senior Lecturer in Voice at the University of Texas Austin, Butler School of Music since 2012. More specifics on Mr. Albert's career can be found on CD Baby, Spotify, Amazon.com and Google.com.

Born in Tijuana, Baja California, **Andrea Alvarado Troncoso** received a bachelor's degree in music - Viola Performance from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. She has played in chamber music ensembles, orchestras, and festivals in Mexico, the USA, Austria, Italy, and Germany. Additionally, Andrea Alvarado has been active in collaborating with pop and rock artists from Latin America and beyond, such as Michael Bublé and Café Tacvba. Andrea completed both her Master's degree as a Fulbright scholar and a Professional Performance Certificate at Pennsylvania State University. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Viola Performance, with the prestigious Mexican scholarship Fonca-Secihti.

John Bailey is Richard H. Larson Distinguished Professor of Music and flutist with the Moran Woodwind Quintet at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Glenn Korff School of Music. He is principal flutist with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra, with which he has appeared as concerto soloist on several occasions. Both his master's and doctorate were earned at Northwestern University under Walfrid Kujala. He has lectured, performed, and conducted at numerous National Flute Association (NFA) conventions and national and international conferences of the College Music Society (CMS), and has been a guest of the Florida Flute Fair, the Rochester Flute Fair, the Pittsburgh Flute Club, the Raleigh Area Flute Association, and the Flute Society of St. Louis, as well as the Seattle Young Artists Music Festival. Since 2001 he has conducted the International Flute Orchestra (35 professional flutists and teachers) on tour in Europe, Asia, and South America. He was President of the National Flute Association 2003-2004 and program chair for NFA conventions in 2002 and 2016.

Cellist **Karen Becker** is a passionate and dedicated soloist, chamber musician and teacher. Her career has taken her around the world to places such as the Czech Republic, England, Korea, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, and throughout the United States. National and international festival appearances include the Ameropa Music Festival in Prague, SoundWaves Music Festival, Red Lodge Music Festival, and more. While in Prague, Becker performed in a series of concerts in a variety of venues throughout the city, such as the prestigious Suk Hall at the Rudolfinum, Martinu Hall at the Academy of Music, and the Hall of Mirrors at the Klementinum. Concerto performances include those by Dvorak, Elgar, Haydn (D Major), Saint-Saens (A minor), Schumann, Tchaikovsky (Rococo), Vivaldi, as well as the Nebraska premiere of Swedish composer Kurt Atterberg's beautiful neo-romantic cello concerto with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Becker is a former member of Trio Nuovo and the Omega String Quartet. She has served as principal cellist of both the Melkus Ensemble and the International String Orchestra in England, Norway, and Switzerland, has appeared as soloist and principal cellist with the Texas Cello Choir at the American String



Teachers National Conference and the Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic, and on “Front Row Center,” a Texas Public Television program.

Talea CMS Bloch is an Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre at Nebraska Wesleyan University, where she teaches Musical Theatre Voice, Theory, History, and Techniques courses. She is a stage and music director as well as a professional voice coach. Bloch is one of 24 coaches in the world certified in Vocal Combat Technique. Bloch’s areas of research include Contemporary Commercial Styles, Vocal Extremes, Neurodiversity in the Arts, Curriculum Development and Assessment, and the history of small-town opera houses. She holds her Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as a BA from Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Melissa Joy (MJ) Britton [they/them/theirs] is 30 years old. They earned their bachelor’s degree in Vocal Performance at Delta State University in 2017, where they studied with Drs. Mary Lenn Buchanan, Chad Payton, and Laurissa Backlin. Then, they earned their master’s degree in Vocal Performance from Austin Peay State University in 2019 under the direction of Drs. Jeffrey Williams and Virginia Lile Boaz. They enjoy arranging popular songs for a cappella groups in their spare time. They have participated three times in The Wesley Balk Institute, where they (most recently) performed as Third Lady in the opening scene from *The Magic Flute* and as Head in “Head, Heart” by George Maurer. They are also a member of The American Caroling Company, and they were seen spreading Christmas cheer throughout middle Tennessee in December of 2024.

Tyrese Byrd, tenor, is a native of Greenville, South Carolina. Recent performances include Ubaldo in Haydn’s *Armida* with Opera NEO and the Hungarian State Opera, Prologue/Peter Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*) and Pluton/Aristée (*Orphée aux Enfers*) at the University of Michigan, *Police Buddy 1* (Blue) with Toledo Opera, and Don Basilio in Kjartansson’s *Bliss* with Detroit Opera. As a 2021-2022 studio artist at Madison Opera, Tyrese sang *Normanno* (Lucia di Lammermoor), *Mercury* (Orpheus in the Underworld), and in 2023, he returned as Don Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*) as a guest artist. In 2024, Tyrese was a Studio Artist with Chautauqua Opera Company. On the concert stage, Tyrese was the tenor soloist in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* on tour in Argentina with The Washington Chorus. Other credits include *Messiah* (Toledo Symphony), *Bonds’ The Ballad of the Brown King* (Akron Symphony), and several J.S. Bach works as a frequent soloist with SC Bach. A passionate recitalist, Tyrese works to champion the music of Black composers in recitals across the country and has appeared at the Hugo Wolf Akademie in Stuttgart, Germany. Tyrese holds degrees from Furman University and the University of Michigan where he is currently pursuing a DMA in Voice Performance. tyresebyrdtenor.com.

Originally from North Platte, NE, violinist **Jack Carlson** is a versatile teacher and performer. Having earned his B.A. in Music from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, he is continuing studies with Professor David Neely at the GKSOM for his master’s degree. At UNL, Carlson has consistently engaged with young learners in Lincoln through the UNL/LPS String Project and provides private studio work with the Emily Mefort Beginning Piano Studio. Jack thoroughly enjoys chamber music as well. He has performed regularly in GKSOM’s Chamber-Fest and the Flyover New Music Series. Jack is also fortunate to be a current member of the Ravnan Quartet at the GKSOM. Through teaching and performance, Jack strives to meet students at their developmental level, foster self-confidence, and help others have meaningful musical experiences for life!

Alfonzo “Al” Cooper Jr. is an active vocalist, recitalist, conductor and educator. He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Voice at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama. Throughout his career, Cooper has accomplished much in the realms of voice and performing. Cooper, a tenor, has sung major roles in both oratorio and operatic literature. This includes Handel’s *Messiah*, J.S. Bach’s *Magnificat*, Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*, Offenbach’s *Les Contes D’Hoffmann*, Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale*, and Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. Cooper holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music (Voice) from Albany State University; a Historically Black College & University (HBCU) in Southwest Georgia, and both Masters (2015) and Doctoral (2020) degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Cooper holds memberships in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM), Pi Kappa Lambda International Honor Music Society, Inc., Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity, Inc., and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated.

Dr. **Minnita Daniel-Cox** attended Bowling Green State University, where she received a Bachelor of Music in Music Performance, and the University of Michigan, where she earned her Master of Music and her Doctor of Musical Arts degrees. In 2014, Dr. Daniel-Cox established the Dunbar Music Archive and has presented her research for the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the National Opera Association, College Music Society, Society for American Music, National Association for



Music Education, International Society for Music Education, Song Collaborators Consortia, Ohio Music Education Association, and the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives. She has performed Dunbar Archive repertoire recitals in venues across the United States and around the world. Dr. Daniel-Cox has received over \$350,000 in funding for her Dunbar work, including two National Endowment for the Humanities grants and a Mellon Foundation grant for the Dunbar Project. Dr. Daniel-Cox regularly appears with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, the Miami Valley Symphony Orchestra, and the Bach Society of Dayton. Recently, she has performed the roles of Anna Gomez in Menotti's *The Consul* and Sister Rose in *Dead Man Walking* with Dayton Opera. She is regularly featured in broadcasts for WDPR Discover Classical. She is currently Professor of Voice and Coordinator of the Voice Area at the University of Dayton.

Dr. **Anna DeGraff** is an instructor of applied voice and music history at South Dakota State University. She holds undergraduate degrees in music and psychology from the University of Nebraska and graduate degrees in vocal performance from the University of Minnesota. A versatile mezzo soprano, her credits include such varied roles as Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), and Ado Annie (*Oklahoma!*). A strong proponent of contemporary music, she has participated in several workshops and premieres of works by living composers such as Robert Aldridge, Herschel Garfein, Jocelyn Hagen, Kurt Knecht, and Lisa Neher. Anna has won the NATS Nebraska Artist Award and was the recipient of the 2014 Stratton Fellowship for a cultural exchange in Switzerland. Her professional affiliations include memberships in Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Alpha Iota, Golden Key Society, and Pi Kappa Lambda.

Sofia Dominguez is a senior music education student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is an active UNL Opera participant. Her most recent engagements include playing Madame de Croissy in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, as well as performing in and student directing Opera Scenes this past spring. She will perform as Hansel in UNL Opera's production of *Hansel and Gretel* later this fall.

Scott Dugdale is a graduate of Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Music Education with an emphasis in voice and his Master of Music Education at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. He is in his 30th year of teaching and is currently a Co-Director of Vocal Activities at Papillion-LaVista South High School. At Papillion LaVista South, Scott co-directs the Varsity Choir, Concert Choir, Freshman Choir, and Treble Choir as well as Titan Radiance, Titan Express, Titan Revolution, and Titanium show choirs. Under his direction, choirs and singers have competed and performed in the Nebraska Music Education Association's conference, Iowa and Nebraska All-State Festival, District and State Large Group contests, State Solo and Ensemble Contests, State Show Choir Contests, and numerous Show Choir Invitationals. His show choirs have won numerous awards such as "Grand Champion", "Best Soloist", "Best Choreography", "Best Band", "Best Roadies", "Best Vocals," and "Sportsmanship". He has served as the Nebraska All-State Auditions Chair for the Nebraska Music Education Association. Scott began his teaching career in 1995 at Falls City Sacred Heart High School in Falls City, Nebraska. He also taught in the Griswold Community School District in Griswold, Iowa, before teaching privately in Ardmore, Oklahoma. More recently, Scott taught for 9 years in the Millard Public Schools, 3 years at Millard West and 6 years at Millard North, before coming to Papillion LaVista South in 2015.

Mezzo-soprano **Cherry Duke** has performed over 60 principal roles with opera companies and orchestras throughout the US and abroad. With El Paso Opera, she has performed leading roles in several productions and served as Artistic Associate and Director of Resident Artists. This year, she was appointed Artistic Director for EPO. Duke was part of the original cohort of "Singing Down the Barriers," an intensive course of study of vocal works by Black composers. In 2023–24, Duke was selected to present her solo recital of songs by African American and African diaspora composers at the Texoma Regional Conference of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and the Sam Houston State University Art Song Festival. She has served as director of opera and professor of voice at the University of Texas at El Paso since 2015. In 2023, Duke received the UT System's top recognition, the Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award.

Tanner Engeseth is a baritone from De Forest, WI. He is currently a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, studying under Dr. Jamie Reimer. Recent engagements include Marquis de la Force in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* with UNL Opera, Melchior in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with UNL Opera, and Dandini in *La Cenerentola* with FIO Italia. He is a regional finalist of the West Central NATS Chapter and has previously won first place in his category at the State NATS level in Wisconsin. Tanner also has a BM Music Education degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.



Black American soprano **Nina Evelyn** is recognized for her powerful voice and commitment to diversifying the classical music canon by promoting works by Black composers. This year, she was named a St. Louis District Winner of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. Highlights from last season include debuting with Heritage Chorale as the Soprano Soloist in Margaret Bonds' *Simon Bore the Cross* & Florence Price's *Abraham Walks at Midnight* and spending the summer at the Aspen Music Festival. In 2022, she made a triumphant mainstage debut at Boston Conservatory at Berklee as the title role in Floyd's *Susannah*, which was recognized as a standout performance of the year by WBUR radio. Previous engagements include performances as Monisha in Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* with the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Micaela in *Carmen* with Opera North. Nina is a recent graduate of Boston Conservatory at Berklee where she received her MM in Opera Performance and PSC in Voice Performance.

Richard Fountain is Dean of the School of Creative Arts and Professor of Piano at Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, TX, and serves as Principal Keyboard for Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra and the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra. Fountain is one of very few pianists to perform the cycle of Franz Liszt's monumental transcriptions of Beethoven's nine symphonies. He is also devoted to the poetic and religious music of Liszt as well as American repertoire from all eras. Fountain served as President of the Texas Music Teachers Association from 2022-2024 and was inducted into the Steinway & Sons Teacher Hall of Fame in 2021. Fountain holds degrees from Taylor University (BM), the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (MM, DMA), and Wayland Baptist University (MBA). Fountain is an enthusiastic traveler, having traveled to forty-six of the fifty United States and fifteen other countries. He possesses a strangely comprehensive knowledge of the U.S. Interstate Highway system.

Morgan Goad is a master's student in Vocal Performance at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, hailing from Hillsboro, MO. With a unique blend of artistic interests, she holds both a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a Bachelor of Science in Advertising from Southeast Missouri State University. A passionate performer and composer, Morgan thrives on stage, blending her love for music with a deep creativity that extends to the visual arts. Outside of music, she enjoys spending time outdoors, reading a good book, and unwinding with a good video game. Her diverse skill set and broad artistic vision set her apart, combining the precision of her vocal training with the imagination and storytelling found in her creative pursuits. With a commitment to growth and innovation in both performance and composition, Morgan is eager to bring fresh, bold perspectives to the world of music.

Lenora Green, soprano, has performed with the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas under the baton of Paul Haas and collaborated with Maestro John Jeter and the Fort Smith Symphony Orchestra. Her opera roles include as Mimi, Mary (Highway 1, U.S.A.), Countess Susanna (*Il Segreto di Susanna*), Donna Anna, Suor Angelica, and Antonia. Awards: Jane Willson Emerging Artist, Sarasota Opera Guild, Metropolitan Opera, and NATS. Former Artist-In-Residence for Stax Music Academy, LeMoyne-Owen College, and Opera Memphis, Dr. Green-Turner earned her DMA and MM from the University of Michigan and Performance Diploma from Indiana University. A member of EXIGENCE (Dr. Eugene Rogers) and TACTUS (Dr. Warren Puffer Jones), she is the Vice President Elect of the Arkansas Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), the business owner of Green Room Studios, LLC, and on the voice faculty at the University of Arkansas.

Soprano **Amy Guevara** – praised by Opera News for “bringing sunny passion to Carmela” in Manuel de Falla's *La Vida Breve* – has been heard on opera, concert, and recital stages throughout the United States and abroad. Guevara has sung with Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia under the baton of John Jacob Niles as well as performing with Victorian Lyric Opera in Northern Virginia, Lyric Opera Theatre (VA), and Indiana Opera Theatre (IN), among other companies. Recital and concert appearances include the Phoenix Symphony, in Bach's *St. John's Passion* as part of a select choir, the Redding Performing Arts Society (CA), Reston Performing Arts (VA), and the Dumbarton Recital Series in Washington, DC. As a Lecturer at the Glenn Korff School of Music, Guevara teaches applied lessons, coursework, and directs the Opera Scenes Program. In collaboration with the School of Music, Guevara has performed on faculty recitals and opera scenes performances.

Dr. **Suna Gunther** is an Assistant Professor in the Voice and Jazz areas of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Glenn Korff School of Music. She previously served as Coordinator of Voice at the College of Saint Rose, Instructor of Musical Theatre at the University of North Dakota, and Instructor of Voice at Berea College. Outside the classroom, she is an active performer and stage director, director and co-founder of Soo Opera Theatre's Summer Apprentice Program, and served on the 2023 faculty of the Brancaloneoni International Music Festival in Piobbico, Italy. Along with the other members of the SALT Quintet, she has



developed and commissioned a series of micro-operas depicting the lives of real-life women across generations entitled *A Mosaic of Mothers*. Dr. Gunther holds degrees from Northwestern University and Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

Traci Hall has been accompanying and collaborating with instrumentalists, ensembles, choirs, and vocal soloists for nearly 40 years. She is currently the staff collaborative pianist for the Northwest Arkansas Community College, the Suzuki Music School of Arkansas, and the Community Music School, and is one of several freelance collaborative pianists for U of A students. Traci has served as staff collaborative pianist for the Ozark Suzuki Institute and has had the privilege of collaborating with guest artists hosted by the Arkansas Philharmonic Orchestra.

Admired for her consummate skill and for her “musical excellence which is overshadowed only by her generous spirit and kindness to her colleagues” (Thomas Wilkins, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, Boston Symphony, and Omaha Symphony), pianist **Stacie Haneline** maintains an active career in vocal, choral, symphonic, chamber, opera, and instrumental repertoire. A versatile musician, selected highlights include Carnegie Hall, the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp, the American Cathedral in Paris, France, Sydney Opera House, New York City Opera, Kennedy Center, Hawaii Opera, Virginia Symphony, Virginia Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, University of Australia, Brevard Music Center, Omaha Symphony, and Opera Omaha. Performance highlights include winning the Gold Prize at the London Virtuoso Music Awards with the world premiere of Shawn Okpebholo’s *Words Like Freedom* with soprano Jamie Reimer in 2024. Collaborative highlights include Rosephanye Powell’s *Hold Fast to Dreams* with soprano Lisa Burrs and violinist Naima Burrs; Andre Myers’ *Surviving the Apocalypse* with soprano, Jamie Reimer and baritone, Byron Jones during the 25th African American Art Song Alliance; Clint Needham’s *Voices with the Boston Symphony String Quartet and orchestra*; the Zodiac Chamber Festival in Nice, France; the premiere of Leslie Adams’ *Dunbar Songs* with soprano Gail Robinson-Oturu; and commissioned works by Brittany Boykin and Gwyneth Walker for the Haneline-Reimer duo. The first of three recordings for Centaur Records featured Robert Owens’ vocal and chamber music, which were awarded two highly coveted Judges Awards from the American Prize Competition in Chamber Music and Art Song.

Upon receiving her Bachelor of Music Degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, **Lauren Harris Wright** attended Georgia State University, where she received her Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance. Lauren then became a part of the Sarasota Opera’s Young Apprentice Program, covering the role of Mary (*Die Fliegende Holländer*) and received the Sarasota Opera Guild’s Young Artist Award. She received her DMA in Vocal Performance from The University of North Carolina Greensboro in May of 2025, focusing on the music of Black composers, culminating in a dissertation lecture-recital based on the presentation song cycle, *This Great Cloud of Witnesses*, using original poetry and set to music by composer Jarrett Roseborough. Lauren has a fruitful career singing both Mezzo and Soprano roles, including *Serena* (*Porgy and Bess*), *Mamie* (*Emmett Till: An Opera in Three Acts*), and *Mary* (*William Grant Still’s Opera Highway 1, USA*).

Versatile artist, teacher, arts administrator, and baritone **Allen Henderson** is currently Executive Director of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), the world’s largest professional association of voice teachers, supervising a talented staff in promoting continuing education for voice teachers; publishing a recognized scholarly journal, *Journal of Singing*; and promoting voice education among a wide array of constituencies, from recreational singers to voice educators and medical doctors. In this position, he serves as administrator for the International Congress of Voice Teachers held every four years at locations around the world. He is also Professor of Music at Georgia Southern University where he teaches voice. He holds degrees from Carson Newman College (BM) where he was the outstanding graduate in music, the University of Tennessee (MM), and the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati (DMA), where his minor was in Arts Administration.

Barbara Hill Moore is Senior Associate Dean for Faculty and Meadows Foundation Distinguished Professor of Voice at SMU Meadows School of the Arts. She began teaching at Meadows in 1974 and served as chair of the voice department from 1977 through 1992. Prior to her SMU appointment (1969-1974), she taught at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois, the St. Louis Public School System, and the St. Louis Archdiocese. She received a B.S. from Lincoln University of Missouri and an M.S. as a graduate fellow from the University of Illinois in Champaign, Illinois. Hill Moore has performed with orchestras throughout the United States and Europe. She was a frequent performer in Western Europe, especially Germany, where she sang in opera, concert, and recital, premiering the works of many American composers. Opera lovers in Berlin know Hill Moore for her interpretation of Jenny in Kurt Weill’s *Threepenny Opera*, which she sang in more than 50 performances in Berlin and Cologne, repeating the role with the Pittsburgh Opera in Philadelphia. She sang the role of *Serena* in the 50th anniversary performances of Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* in Charleston, South Carolina. Afterwards, she sang the role of *Bess* with the Florentine Opera, in



opera productions, and in concerts throughout Europe and North America. Other roles include Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with the Houston Ebony Opera and the title roles in *Dido and Aeneas* with Dallas Chamber Opera and *Aida* with the Shreveport Opera. Most recent performances include Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with the SMU Meadows Symphony Orchestra, Hector Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'Ete* with the Sherman Symphony, *Porgy and Bess* with the Victoria Symphony, and solo recitals in Nürnberg, Hannover, Hameln, Heilbronn, and Weilheim, Germany, and Numana and Ancona, Italy. In October 2017, she was invited to sing a concert of American music at the 7th International Festival of Strings in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Hill Moore is the 2022 recipient of the Lift Every Voice "Legacy Award" presented by the National Opera Association and received the 2023-24 Elizabeth Mathias Lifetime Achievement Award at the Mu Phi Epsilon International Convention in Dallas. Hill Moore also received the Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from Lincoln University in 2023.

Violinist **Rossitza Jekova-Goza** has performed across the United States, Europe, and her native Bulgaria as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. She has held leadership roles as concertmaster of the Baton Rouge, North Arkansas, and Amarillo symphonies, as well as principal second violinist of London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2000, she was named concertmaster of the Verbier Orchestra in Switzerland. Since 2010, she has served as first violinist of the Harrington String Quartet, performing nationally and internationally. Dr. Goza graduated *summa cum laude* from Louisiana State University and earned her doctorate from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Influential mentors include Kevork Mardirossian, David and Linda Cerone, and Simon Fischer. She has taught at the Universities of Arkansas, North Texas, and Oklahoma, as well as the renowned Encore School for Strings. Currently, she is on faculty at West Texas A&M University, performs with the Harrington String Quartet, and serves as concertmaster of the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra.

Jawan Jenkins, baritone and native of New York City. Jawan received his training early as a member of The Boys Choir of Harlem. Premiered roles include Asku in *Stomping Grounds* with The Glimmerglass Festival, Mr. Delgado in Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life*, and Ricky Ian Gordon's *A Coffin in Egypt*, both with Houston Grand Opera. He has also performed as Ford in *Falstaff*, Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Marquis de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Charlie in *Three Decembers*, and Vater in *Hänsel und Gretel*. He has made recent debuts with Vegas City Opera, Opera San José, Seattle Opera, and the Albany and Georgia Symphony Orchestras. Jawan obtained his bachelor's degree from Prairie View A&M University, and his Master's and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from The University of Texas at Austin. He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Voice at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Brian Johnson is Co-Director of Choral Activities at Papillion-La Vista South High School in Papillion, NE. He co-directs four curricular concert choirs, four show choirs, and two musicals. Brian received his bachelor's degree in K-12 Vocal Music Education from Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, IA, and went on to the University of Southern Mississippi, where he earned his Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting. Brian is in his tenth year of teaching at Papillion South and taught for thirteen years prior in Iowa: three at Le Mars Community and ten at Lewis Central. Brian lives in Papillion, NE, with his wonderful wife Emily, their amazing children, Tyson and Ava, and rescue pooches, Rona and Penny.

Tenor **Cornelius Johnson's** repertoire encompasses classical, musical theatre, and sacred music. His operatic performances include roles in Bizet's *Carmen*, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Okoye's *Harriet Tubman: When I Crossed that Line to Freedom*, Puccini's *La Bohème*, Shore's *Freedom Ride*, Shostakovich's *The Nose*, and Still's *Troubled Island*. Johnson has performed with Chicago Opera Theater, Houston Grand Opera, La Scala, LA Opera, Opera Bastille, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, South Shore Opera, and Teatro Real. His concert performances include Beethoven's 9th Symphony, Hailstork's *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Mozart's *Requiem*. Other appearances include performances at Chicago's Symphony Center in the world premiere of Baldwin Chronicles: *Midnight Ramble*, by Renée Baker, sponsored by the African American Network and with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Johnson is an associate professor of music at Olive-Harvey College and an artist faculty of theatre voice at CCPA of Roosevelt University.

Singer/Master Teacher **Byron Jones** is well-known to Washington DC-area audiences, having performed regularly for more than three decades in opera, concert, recital, and intimate cabaret settings. Jones has received critical praise for his warmth of tone and clear, expressive use of language. His operatic repertoire includes roles by Mozart, Puccini, Ullmann, Floyd, and Mollicone. As a concert singer, Jones has performed major works by Monteverdi, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Mahler, Verdi, Berlioz, Orff, Fauré, Hailstork, Finzi, and Britten. His deep commitment to American art song includes everything from Ives and Owens to Mack and Sankaram. In October 2022, he traveled to Irvine CA, for the African American Art Song Alliance Conference to



present a commissioned work by Andre Myers. Dr. Jones is Professor of Voice and Coordinator of Vocal Performance Programs at Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester, VA. Summer 2025 marked his 13th season with Seagle Festival in Schroon Lake NY.

Sylvia D. Jones is a soprano hailing from the Pacific Northwest. Audiences have acclaimed her singing as “angelic,” “full of passion,” and “tear-jerking.” Her versatility shines through her repertoire, spanning classical to gospel genres. Her talents have been showcased notably at Carnegie Hall as a recitalist (2022), A Baylor Christmas (2022) as a featured soloist, and the Baylor Symphony Orchestra aria concert as a winner of the 2024 Aria Competition. Sylvia is a graduate of the University of Washington (B.M. Music Education and B.A. Music) and Baylor University (M.M. Church Music). Ms. Jones is currently a doctoral student in Church Music at Baylor where she studies voice with Dr. Kimberly Monzón.

Daveda Karanas, mezzo-soprano, serves as Associate Professor of Voice at Texas State University where she received the 2024 Presidential Seminar Award for her scholarly/creative activities. In 2019, she made her Carnegie Hall debut singing Mahler’s 2nd Symphony with Athens Philharmonic and her Middle East debut at The Israeli Opera as Liese in The Passenger, a role she has performed with Florida Grand Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Teatro Real, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Major role debuts include Kundry in Parsifal at Lyric Opera of Chicago, Ježibaba in Rusalka at Arizona Opera, Brangäne in Tristan und Isolde at Canadian Opera Company, Amneris in Aida at Arizona Opera, Azucena in Il Trovatore at Opera Grand Rapids, and both Waltraute and Second Norn in Götterdämmerung at San Francisco Opera. She made her German debut as Marfa in Khovanshchina at Oper Frankfurt and her European debut as Judit in Bluebeard’s Castle at Maggio Musicale Fiorentino.

Originally from Slovakia, Dr. **Janka Krajciová** has been a member of the Piano Artist-Faculty at the Omaha Conservatory of Music since 2015. In addition to maintaining an active private studio, she is a sought-after collaborative pianist in the Omaha area, frequently performing with vocalists and instrumentalists at competitions, festivals, and masterclasses. A passionate chamber musician, Janka has performed with violinist Lisa Nielsen as the Goldenrod Duo at venues such as the Durham Museum, Midtown Crossing, and Bryan West Hospital. Janka’s writing has been featured in the well-known music periodicals, Piano Magazine and American Music Teacher. Janka holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, a Master of Music from Kansas State University, and a Bachelor of Music from Northwestern State University of Louisiana. Outside of music, Janka loves to swim and spend time outdoors with her boys.

An active performer and collaborator, pianist **Micah Leary** features a variety of works, including Chopin, Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Prokofiev. He has performed the first movement of Grieg’s Piano Concerto in A minor and the first movement of Rachmaninoff’s 1st Piano Concerto with the Cairn Symphony orchestra. He performed Poulenc’s Double Piano Concerto with the University of Nebraska Symphony Orchestra. He also made his solo debut at Carnegie Hall performing Rachmaninoff’s Etude Tableau Op. 39, No. 6. While in the Philadelphia region, Micah ran his own private studio for piano students teaching classes in music theory and history and collaborated on multiple opera productions. Micah continues to work as an accompanist and vocal coach for studios in Lincoln, NE and he enjoys teaching private lessons. Micah is on the piano faculty at Csehy Summer School of Music and enjoys teaching there each summer.

Tenor, **Albert R. Lee**’s performances have been described as “vocally sumptuous,” “musically distinctive,” and even “acrobatically agile.” He is featured soloist on a recording of works by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer George Walker on Albany Records, singing musical settings of Walt Whitman’s “When lilacs last in dooryard bloomed,” a poem written as an elegy to Abraham Lincoln after his assassination. Most recently, he appeared as tenor soloist in Handel’s Messiah with the National Chorale and the Duke University Chapel, he was tenor soloist in Adolphus Hailstork’s cantata I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes with the London Symphony and was a featured artist on Apple Music’s play list “The Classical Voice” performing a selection from the recently released A Breath of Air singing settings of Langston Hughes and Walt Whitman poems by Monica Houghton. Dr Lee currently serves as Associate Dean for Student Life and Community Engagement at the Yale School of Music.

Christopher Marks serves as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s vice chancellor for faculty affairs. Marks was associate dean of the fine and performing arts college 2015-2023. He is a professor at the Glenn Korff School of Music, where he has taught organ, music theory, and performance practice since 2006. He has taught organ, music theory, and performance practice, and previously taught organ and served as University Organist at Syracuse University. An active proponent of new music, Marks has premiered a number of commissioned organ works. His diverse stylistic interests also steer him towards a variety of other repertoire, with a recent interest in American organ music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Equally comfortable with



solo and collaborative playing, he has performed with ensembles such as the Boston Brass, Ethos Percussion Group, and Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra. He holds degrees from the University of Richmond (B.M., piano), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (M.M., piano and M.M., organ), and the Eastman School of Music (D.M.A., organ), where he studied with Michael Farris. His performances have garnered him top prizes in competitions, including the Arthur Poister Competition, the San Marino Competition, the Fort Wayne Competition, and the Mader Competition.

Evangeline Mason is a soprano from Omaha, Nebraska. Through her adolescence, she sang in different choirs, including the Omaha Symphony's 2019 performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms. In 2023, she transferred to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to pursue a deeper study of Opera. She has sung in Italy, Miami, and Austria, performing notable roles in Mozart's work such as Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito*. This fall, at UNL, she was grateful to perform Sister Constance in *Les Dialogues of the Carmelites* by Francis Poulenc. She has also performed in several opera scenes, including *Die Zauberflöte*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Così fan Tutte*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*. Evangeline Mason is also pursuing a degree in French. Her focus on the French language has allowed for a deeper understanding and knowledge of French culture, poetry, and diction necessary for French opera and Chanson.

William McMullen, professor of oboe at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is principal oboe with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra and oboist in the Moran Woodwind Quintet. McMullen is a frequent recitalist throughout the United States with pianist Catherine Herbener and has performed at IDRS conventions in Utah, Florida, Arizona, Wisconsin, Miami University (Ohio), New York City, the Netherlands, Australia, and Banff, Canada. His book on English horn repertoire, "Soloistic English Horn Literature (1736-1984)" was published in 1994 by Pendragon Press. His CD "Twentieth-Century British Music for Oboe and Piano" with Catherine Herbener was released in 2002 by Crystal Records and includes works by Bennett, Howells, Jacob, Berkeley, and Rubbra. "Duos for Flute and Oboe," a CD with flutist Claudia Anderson, was released in 2005 by Centaur Records. The Moran Woodwind Quintet has recorded four CDs on Crystal Records: a collection of contemporary quintet music titled "Postcards From the Center" and three CDs of the complete quintet repertoire of German composer Theodor Blumer.

Declared a "skyscraping tenor" in a review by Arkansan music critic Eric Harrison, Dr. **Charles Moore** hails from Kingston, Jamaica, and had his early music beginnings in the Boys Choir of the St. Richard's Catholic School under the baton of internationally renowned conductor and musician Lloyd Hall. Dr. Moore received his Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Mississippi and his Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts Degrees in Performance and Pedagogy from the Louisiana State University. His area of focus in his terminal degree was on the works of H. Leslie Adams. Theater appearances include Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, The Prince in *Rusalka*, Vuval in William Grant Still's *Troubled Island*; Pat in David T. Little's *Dog Days*; Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*. Concert performances also include appearances with the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra, Don Ottavio from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Handel's *Messiah* with the Longmont Symphony Orchestra.

Ramon Mosate Jr. is an emerging Countertenor and Tenor based in Wichita, KS. He has performed with Opera Kansas, Wichita Grand Opera, Music on Site Inc., Opera Seme, and others. He completed his undergraduate studies at Wichita State University, studying under Alan Held and Michael Sylvester. During his time there, he performed as a tenor in productions such as *Susannah*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Rusalka*, and various opera scenes. Ramon made his professional debut with Wichita Grand Opera in Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* as "Sultan Achmet." Since then, he has continued to build his career as a versatile artist with a colorful, expressive countertenor voice. Recent roles include "Ruggiero" in Handel's *Alcina*, "Xerxes" in Handel's *Serse*, and "The Refugee" in Dove's *Flight*. With a growing list of credits, Ramon is quickly establishing himself as a dynamic and exciting presence in the opera world.

David C. Neely is Professor of Violin at the Glenn Korff School of Music, where he joined the faculty in 1993. Professor Neely is currently artist/faculty member of the Orfeo International Music Festival in Vipiteno, Italy. In 2006, 2007 & 2009, he served as artist/teacher of violin at the Schlern Summer Music Festival in Schlern, Italy. He also taught and performed for twelve years at the Rocky Ridge Summer Music Festival in Estes Park, Colorado from 1998 to 2009. Neely is recorded on the Albany record label. He has recorded as a member of the Omaha Symphony. Neely is a member of the Trans-Nebraska Players chamber group, which has performed throughout the United States and in Canada. He maintains an active performance career, performing and giving master classes throughout the United States and Europe. He currently plays in the Omaha Symphony in Omaha, Nebraska.



Baritone **Kenneth Overton's** symphonious baritone voice has sent him around the globe, making him one of the most sought-after opera and concert singers of his generation. Kenneth is a 2020 GRAMMY AWARD WINNER for Best Choral Performance in the title role of Richard Danielpour's *The Passion of Yeshua* with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by JoAnn Falletta. On the operatic stage Kenneth has appeared with The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Royal Danish Opera, L'Opera de Montreal, Palacio Bellas Artes (Mexico City), Deutsche Oper Berlin, Capetown Opera, Opera Carolina, North Carolina Opera, Opera Montana, Connecticut Opera, Skylark Opera, Opera Memphis, Nashville Opera, Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, Sacramento Opera, Fresno Grand Opera, Pensacola Opera, Mobile Opera, Opera Tampa, Opera Idaho, Houston Ebony Opera, Opera Delaware, New Orleans Opera, Opera Ebony, New York City Opera, Bregenzer Festspiele, Fort Worth Opera, and the Welsh National Opera among others. On the concert stage Mr. Overton has been a soloist with The New York Philharmonic, The Washington Chorus, Oregon Bach Festival, Chamber Music North West, NDR Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Lithuanian Philharmonic, Sopot Festival Poland, Klagenfurt Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, Lancaster Symphony Orchestra, Harrisburg Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, New Haven Symphony, Indianapolis Symphonic Choir, The National Chorale, Bard Music Festival, Austin Symphony, Duluth Superior Symphony, New York Chorale Society, Oregon Symphony, Annapolis Symphony, Harlem Chamber Players, American Symphony Orchestra, Spartanburg Philharmonic, and The Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The **Papillion-La Vista South Concert Choir** is a dynamic ensemble consisting of 55 talented mixed voices from grades 10-12. These dedicated students perform throughout the school year in various capacities, including as a concert choir, show choir, and in smaller ensembles, fulfilling a broad range of musical needs for both the school and the local community. The choir frequently showcases its talents by performing the National Anthem at school and community events, as well as participating in holiday performances and special occasions. Many of the choir members are highly engaged in other school sports and activities, while maintaining exceptional academic standards. The choir is honored to contribute to this afternoon's event and is grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with other outstanding musicians. The Papillion-La Vista South Concert Choir is under the direction of Scott Dugdale and Brian Johnson and accompanied by Mrs. Anne Smith.

Justin Payne is a classically trained tenor, composer, and playwright from Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to collaborating with Dani Cleveland on *Heaven Come Home* and *Little Brown Boy*, Justin composed music for *The Draft* with playwright Lisa Harrison. One of Justin's newest creations is *Belle Terre the Musical*, a whimsical story that sends an adolescent young woman on a journey to self-discovery with music inspired by the New Orleans brass band style. Justin currently performs as the tenor soloist for Handel's *Messiah* with the Voices of Omaha, in addition to having sung on stages in Austria, Italy, and China. Justin has also enjoyed music directing for several plays and new musicals, including *Dreamgirls*, *Giraffe's Can't Dance*, *3 Little Birds*, *Into the Woods*, and *Spunk!* He holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Nebraska Omaha and a Master of Music from Michigan State University and is currently pursuing a doctoral degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Originally from Wisconsin, soprano **Margot Porter** has appeared with the International Lyric Academy in Vicenza, Italy, Opera Omaha, and Opera Steamboat in Colorado. Recent roles include Violetta in *La Traviata*, Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. A graduate of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Dr. Porter serves on the voice and musical theatre faculties at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Clark Potter is the professor of viola in the Glenn Korff School of Music at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln where he also teaches undergraduate conducting. He recently retired after 26 years as principal viola of the Lincoln Symphony and is the violist of the Trans-Nebraska Players and the Nebraska Chamber Players. He earned degrees from Western Washington University, Indiana University, and California Institute of the Arts. Mr. Potter has conducted the Lincoln Youth Symphony since 2007, and with that group, he has performed in six European nations. His research interests include breathing in upper string players, his edition of the six Bach cello suites for viola, and the concert music of film composer Ernest Gold.



Pianist **Denis Plutalov** was born in Tambov, Russia. At age six, he received his first piano lessons. While in his teens, he won several international piano competitions. He actively concertized in the United States, Russia, and Europe. After graduating from the Gnossins Academy in Moscow, Russia, Denis completed his Master of Music degree at the North Carolina School of the Arts, where he studied with a renowned pedagogue Eric Larsen, and received his Doctorate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Denis Plutalov extensively records for the Sheva CD label. Denis befriended Robert Owens in 2015 and took part in the American premiere of his opera "Culture! Culture!" in August 2015. He received precious advice from Robert Owens on piano playing and considers himself one of his disciples.

Adam (A.J.) Reimer and his wife, Stacy, live in Bellevue, Nebraska, with their four children: Owen, Joe, Charlie, and Henry. Mr. Reimer has been teaching vocal music since 2003 and has been at Bellevue West High School since 2006. He received his undergraduate and master's degrees in music education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Mr. Reimer has been a guest clinician and adjudicator for honor choirs and contests in the Midwest, and has presented, conducted, and performed several times at state conventions for both NMEA and NCDA, as well as directed choirs for the 2014 and 2024 Regional ACDA Conventions. He also served as President of the Nebraska Choral Directors' Association. At Bellevue West, Mr. Reimer helps direct the eight choirs in his program, including West High Singers and Project 424. He also directs the Bellevue Singers, an adult community choir.

Recognized for her rich tone and sensitive storytelling, soprano **Jamie Reimer** has performed in opera, oratorio and recital venues on four continents. She most recently received the Gold Prize as Best Professional Singer from the 2024 London Virtuoso Competition. Concert appearances include the soprano solos in performances of Mozart's Requiem, Handel's Messiah, Canteloube's Chants d'Auvergne, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Choral Fantasy, as well as Liszt's Christus for the American Liszt Society. Favorite operatic repertoire includes Fiordiligi (Cosi fan tutte), Contessa Almaviva (Le nozze di Figaro), Erste Dame (Die Zauberflöte), and Anna Murrant (Street Scene). She performs regularly with pianist Stacie Haneline throughout the U.S. and Europe, most recently in Antwerp, Belgium. Their performance of the song cycle Words Like Freedom, composed for the duo by Shawn Okpebholo, won the Gold Prize in the 2024 London Virtuoso Competition. The team's CD, The Last Songs of Robert Owens, was released in 2020 by Centaur Records. The recording was recognized with a Special Judges' Citation from The American Prize in 2021. In 2012, she gave the world premiere of Owens' 4 Sonnets to Eleonora Duse, composed for her voice, and performed the role of Ursula in the North American premiere of Owens' opera Culture! Culture! in 2015. Dr. Reimer is the Richard H. Larsen Distinguished Professor of Music and Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln and Artist-Faculty at the Orfeo Music Festival in Vipiteno, Italy.

Katilyn Rittner currently serves as the Coordinator and Instructor of Class Piano at the University of Northern Colorado. Outside of her duties at UNC, Ms. Rittner maintains an active freelance coaching and collaborative piano career. She regularly collaborates with Aims Community College, Loveland Opera Theatre, The Greeley Chorale, and many other musical organizations. In support of local arts organizations, she serves on the board for The Greeley Children's Chorale and as the First Vice President for the CO-WY Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. Katilyn earned a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance at the University of Northern Colorado, where she then served as the pianist for the major choral ensembles for 12 years. During these years, Katilyn completed a Master of Music in Conducting while remaining involved as a collaborative pianist, coach, and conductor. International highlights include many tours with the Greeley Chorale, the Longmont Chorale, the UNC Opera Department and Opera Classica Europa. Some recent local highlights include the Colorado premiere of Howard Goodall's Eternal Light: A Requiem, a collaboration with composer Robert Strobel, premiering "The Coronavirus Etudes" for piano solo, and collaborating the premiere of "Of Music and Mourning" with trombonist Daniel Cosio.

Philip J. Rogers, a native of Chicago, Illinois, earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education from Kentucky State University and, at the University of Illinois, earned the Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance. He has taught in Indiana, Illinois, and Georgia, where he served as choral conductor, vocal pedagogue, and professor of Music History and Appreciation. As a vocal/choral pedagogue, he takes pride in establishing a solid and confident foundation in solo and choral musicians. In so doing, he seeks to establish within their knowledge base healthy pedagogical tools for vocal stamina and performance longevity with an understanding of how to use their vocal gift as a means of artistic communication. Dr. Philip J. Rogers strives to motivate vocal performers dedicated to achieving vocal health practices and establish performance stamina and longevity.




Darryl Taylor's performances have been noted for their compelling artistry and authority. His is an international career highlighted by performances of art song, opera and oratorio. Opera highlights: title role in Phillip Glass' *Akhmat* for Long Beach Opera; L.A. Opera's *Dido and Aeneas*; Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and *King Arthur* for Long Beach Opera; Pergolesi and Vivaldi *Stabat Mater* with Lyra Baroque Orchestra of St. Paul, Minnesota; performances with the Carmel Bach Festival; the Bach Collegium San Diego under Richard Egarr, Solomon with the City Choir of Washington under Robert Shafer and performances at New York's Carnegie Hall. Founder of the African American Art Song Alliance <<https://artsongalliance.org>>, his extensive discography of recordings on Naxos and Albany record labels has received lavish praise. He was recently inducted to the American Academy of Teachers of Singing and served as a 2022 Master Teacher for the NATS Intern Program.
www.darryltaylor.com

Louise Toppin has received critical acclaim for her operatic, orchestral, and oratorio performances in the United States, Europe, Czech Republic, Sweden, Uruguay, Scotland, China, England, New Zealand, the Caribbean, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Bermuda, Japan, and Spain. Toppin has appeared in recital on many concert series including Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Kennedy Center, and Lincoln Center. Orchestral appearances include: the Norrköping Symphony (Sweden), the Czech National Symphony, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, (Sweden), Tokyo City Orchestra (Japan), The Montevideo Philharmonic (Uruguay), the Scotland Festival Orchestra (Aberdeen, Scotland), the Honolulu, Toledo, Canton, North Carolina, Charlotte, Lafayette, Erie Chamber and Raleigh Chamber Symphony Orchestras, The Bach Aria Group, Phoenix Bach Consort, and the Washington D.C. Bach Consort with conductors such as: Murry Sidlin, Paul Freeman, Richard Aulden Clark, Justin Brown, James Meena, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and Gearhart Zimmerman. As a scholar, she has lectured on the music of African American composers and has appeared on NPR's *All Things Considered* (Margaret Bonds); for many national conventions including the Society for American Music, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, the American Cultural Association, the National Association of Negro Music, NASPAM; and on many college campuses including Harvard, Tufts, and Duke.

Molly Wanless is a soprano from Milton, Wisconsin. Molly is currently pursuing a Master of Music in vocal performance with Dr. Jamie Reimer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Recent engagements include Sister Constance from *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and the titular role from *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with UNL Opera. Her most recent training program was with the Varna Music Academy, where she sang Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. Molly has a B.M. in Vocal Performance from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, where she studied with Brian Leeper.

West High Singers is one of seven different choirs offered at Bellevue West (NE) High School. The singers are auditioned from sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The ensemble focuses on the performance and technical aspects of choral music, including sight-reading and counting. WHS emphasizes singing for one another, finding joy in the rehearsal, and enhancing their musicality. They perform throughout the school year in the school and community. West High Singers regularly performs with the Omaha Symphony as part of the Choral Collaborative. In the last few years, they have shared the stage with Nebraska Wesleyan's University Choir, Tower Choir from NW Missouri State, and Omaha's Symphonic Chorus. Since 2020, the ensemble has performed Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Brahms' *Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Hagenberg's *Illuminare*, as well as a wide variety of classical and contemporary choral pieces.

Pianist **Yimeng Xu** is a doctoral student in collaborative piano at the University of Michigan School of Music, studying with Dr. Ana Maria Otamendi. She holds a Master of Music in Collaborative Piano from the University of Maryland, where she studied with Rita Sloan, collaborating with instrumental and vocal studios, choirs, orchestras, and the Opera Studio. Yimeng was chosen as a pianist for the National Symphony Orchestra summer intensive in 2025. Earning a Bachelor of Music degree in piano at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Yimeng's extensive collaborative experiences included operas, voice, instrumental, and symphonic work throughout the Midwest—a student of Dr. Washington Garcia and Professor Stacie Haneline. Yimeng has performed in master classes for renowned collaborative pianists, including Rita Sloan, Martin Katz, Jonathan Feldman, Kathleen Kelly, Colette Valentine, Elena Abend, Christopher Turbessi, Warren Jones, and Thomas Rosenkranz.



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Owen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.