

# International Women's Day Concert Extravaganza 4th Annual Tribute to Women in the Arts

Saturday, March 8, 2025  
7:30PM

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
611 Randolph St., Oak Park, IL

## FEATURED SINGERS



Anna Caldwell



Jules Furgal



Kelci Kosin



Christine Steyer

## PIANIST



Jennifer McCabe

## GUEST MUSICIANS



Elizabeth Doyle



Ava Logan

## ARTIST



Emily Nelson Taylor

## EMCEE



Claudia Hommel

Featuring music of Amy Beach, Florence Price, Elizabeth Doyle, Marjorie Rusche & Ella Fitzgerald set to words of Sappho, Renée Vivien, Christina Rossetti & others.

## Special Thanks

Kimberly Adami-Hasegawa, Kerri Burkhardt, Paul Geiger, Judy Gaietto-Grace,  
Kimberly & Susan Huizinga, Cappy Kidd, Jeffrey Skender, Mila Tellez,  
Lynn Zamora, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & Concordia University Printing.

Major Donor  
Jethra Kapp

Bellissima Opera Artistic Director, Christine Steyer  
Bellissima Opera Associate Artistic Director, Carl Ratner



[BellissimaOpera.com](http://BellissimaOpera.com)

Show your support for International Women's Day  
#IWD2025 #AccelerateAction

International Women's Day Concert Extravaganza  
4th Annual Tribute to Women in the Arts  
March 8, 2025

Featured singers Anna Caldwell, Kelci Kosin, Jules Furgal  
and Christine Steyer with pianist Jennifer McCabe  
Joined by guest musicians Ava Logan and Elizabeth Doyle  
Artwork by Emily Nelson Taylor  
Emceed by Claudia Hommel

*Part 1*

"Accelerate Action"

Claudia Hommel, Working In Concert Executive Director

*Part 2*

T'amo mia vita  
Take, O Take Those Lips Away  
Amelia's Song FROM *Songs of Experience*  
You Have Become a Forest FROM *Four Poems of Nikita Gill*  
Beside the Sea

Featured Musicians  
words are anonymous, music by Vittoria Aleotti  
words by Shakespeare, music by Amy Beach  
words by Gardner McFall, music by Daron Hagen  
music by Melissa Dunphy  
words by Paul Laurence Dunbar, music by Florence Price

*Part 3*

The Rainbow  
Love Comes Quietly FROM *Songs of Love and Death*  
A Bit of Earth FROM *The Secret Garden*  
La Venus des aveugles FROM *The Pure and the Impure*  
Love Let the Wind Cry - How I Adore Thee

Featured Musicians  
words by Christina Rossetti, music by Ruth Morris Gray  
words by Robert Creeley, music by Marjorie Rusche  
words by Marsha Norman, music by Lucy Simon  
words by Renée Vivien, music by Elizabeth Doyle  
words by Sappho, music by Undine S. Moore

*Part 4*

On behalf of Bellissima Opera

Christine Steyer, Bellissima Opera Artistic Director

*Part 5*

J'ai deux amours  
  
Insufficient Sweetie  
It's De-Lovely FROM *Red Hot and Blue*

Guest Musicians  
French words Koger & Varna, English words Murray & Trivers  
music by V. Scotto  
words by G. Wells, music by I. Jones  
words & music by Cole Porter

*Part 6*

A-Tisket, A-Tasket

words & music by Ella Fitzgerald & Al Feldman  
arranged by David J. Elliott & Doreen Rao

...All are invited to our on-site reception to celebrate with the artists...

In 2019, Bellissima Opera founder and director Christine Steyer joined with Claudia Hommel's many cabaret projects to form the performing arts alliance Working In Concert. Carl Ratner joined as Associate Artistic Director in 2023.

Our goal is to reflect the great diversity of Chicago's population in the artists we work with, the audiences we entertain, the themes we embrace. As a key pillar of Working In Concert's vocal arts initiatives, Bellissima Opera produces concerts on unique themes, often showcasing newer American songs, operas, and works by women. Bellissima also creates and presents new operas from its award-winning *Tales of Transcendence*.

Since 2008, our outreach program, Bellissima Opera In the Classroom, has brought music to more than 24,000 students from kindergarten through high school to grow new generations of classical music lovers.



## Facilitating performing arts up close and personal

Explore our initiatives:

- Bellissima Opera & Song
- Cabaret Connections
- In the Classroom

**BELLISSIMA OPERA**, led by Christine Steyer, creates innovative professional concert events and operas, from the award winning *Tales of Transcendence* opera series to our annual International Women's Day concert celebrating women in the arts. In July 2025, we will present *Midsummer Dream Fairies & Fables* including the recently rediscovered opera *The Last Sorcerer* by 19th century French composer Pauline Viardot.



### BLACK VOICES IN CABARET

The national award-winning Black Voices in Cabaret provides a Black lens into the world of entertainment by raising the recognition afforded to artists of color. Cabaret brings the public face to face with artists who perform Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Soul, Gospel, Theater, Classical song, and more. The *Chicago Sun-Times* says the crowd remains "rapt from start to finish"

### CHICAGO CABARET WEEK

We join Chicago Cabaret Professionals, Act of Kindness Cabaret, and The Cabaret Project to coordinate the fourth annual Chicago Cabaret week May 9-18, 2025. The citywide cabaret festival is supported by the tourism bureau Choose Chicago, featuring more than a dozen venues and acts from American Songbook, jazz, blues, burlesque, international flavors, and more.



### CHICAGO PARIS CABARET CONNEXION

Advancing together the intimate art of cabaret, the seventh exchange will take place in Lyon and Paris from October 23-November 6, 2025. Fans are invited to join us at the cabaret festival while artists meet for masterclasses, workshops, and roundtables. [CabaretConnexion.org](http://CabaretConnexion.org)

**SONGSHOP LIVE** gathers professional singers and advanced amateurs to hone their performance skills. Led by Claudia Hommel, our award-winning song interpretation workshop is held weekly at the DePaul University School of Music and other city locations. SongShop Live brings concerts to a growing audience.



### DIVERSE VOICES IN SCHOOLS



#### Connect | Perform | Inspire

Our school programs are grounded in the drama of opera and the intimacy of Cabaret – infused with language, poetry, social history, and community. Our newest school program for 2024-25 Diverse Voices In Schools, engages students in critical discussions about the world we live in and can change.

Bring these programs to a school near you. Visit [workinginconcert.org/diverse-voices](http://workinginconcert.org/diverse-voices)

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Come to our events [workinginconcert.org/calendar/](http://workinginconcert.org/calendar/)

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## CONNECT \* PERFORM \* INSPIRE

### Working In Concert and Associated Artists Upcoming events

**Friday, March 21** — Join Barbara Smith and Friends “From roots to wings, where we come from and where we soar” at Davenport’s Cabaret

**Saturday, March 22** — **Black Voices in Cabaret presents “Reimagining Cabaret: The Journey Continues” at Logan Center for the Arts**

**Friday, April 11** — Carl Ratner and Christine Steyer join pianist Dana Brown for the classical sounds from “Chicago to Paris with Love” at Davenport’s Cabaret

**Sunday, April 27** — **SongShop Live presents “On the Menu” at Chief O’Neill’s to serve up edible songs with guest artist Robin Watson**

**May 9-18, 2025** — Chicago Cabaret Week. The citywide festival takes place from Park Forest to Arlington Heights

**Saturday, May 10** — **Black Voices In Cabaret joins Chicago Cabaret Week at Freedom Hall in Park Forest**

**Monday, May 12** — Chicago Cabaret Professionals presents “Cities of the World” at Rhapsody Theater in Rogers Park

**Tuesday, May 13** — **Claudia Hommel & Company bring Part 3 of “From Chicago to Paris, with Love” to Rockwell on the River**

**Ticket links at [workinginconcert.org/calendar](https://workinginconcert.org/calendar)**



THE 4TH ANNUAL CITYWIDE FESTIVAL IS  
MAY 9-18, 2025

INCLUDING WORKING IN CONCERT’S



COMING SOON TO [CHICAGOCABARETWEK.ORG](https://chicagocabaretweek.org)

## Chicago Paris Cabaret Connexion

**Join our 7<sup>th</sup> international  
exchange to France:**

**Lyon: October 23-25, 2025**

**Paris: October 26-November 2**

Workshops, Performances and Round Tables with master teachers and coaches from France, US, Brazil and more: Michèle Barbier, Anne & Mark Burnell, Anne Fromm, Isabelle Georges, Claudia Hommel, Elisabeth Howard, Tássia Minuzzo, Jean-Claude Orfali, Angelina Réaux, Clotilde Rullaad, Howard Pfeifer, Wilfried Touati



In Chicago with some of our 2024 participants

**Advancing together the art of cabaret**  
**[cabaretconnexion.org](https://cabaretconnexion.org)**

**SPECIAL THANKS** to our recent capital campaign donors: Stephen Allen, Dr. Susan Arjmand, C. Douglas Cole, Susan E. Dennis, Jethra Kapp, Kymn Kochanek, Theodore Maynard, Melody Owens, Timothy Pahel, Rich Pokorny, Carol Stukey, Craig Weissman CPA, and Clyde Whitaker  
**A SHOUT OUT** to the phone crew of Cappy Kidd & Paul Geiger, and videographer Jeffrey Skender.

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REIMAGINING  
**CABARET**  
*The Journey Continues*



**MARCH 22, 2025 | 7:00 PM**

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LOGAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS



TICKETS at [tiny.cc/BVatLogan](http://tiny.cc/BVatLogan)

# YOU WERE BORN TO SING!

—ELISABETH HOWARD, CELEBRITY VOICE COACH



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"To my friend Elisabeth,  
Thank you for your  
invaluable help!  
Love, **Sting**"

"You're simply the best  
Lad!"  
—**Priscilla Presley**

"Worth many times the  
cost."  
—**Library Journal**

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again! Thank you!"  
—**Nancy Dussault**,  
Broadway & Cabaret star.

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advanced...the authors  
explain, demonstrate and  
have you exercise with  
them."  
—**Journal Of Singing**  
National Association of  
Teachers of Singing

"This training has carried me  
through years of  
professional singing..."  
—**Paige O'Hara**,  
Voice of Belle in Disney's,  
*Beauty and the Beast*

"Covers the whole gamut of  
voice production, to finding  
your individual sound. Well  
worth the time and money."  
—**Elizabeth Doyle**  
Singer, Pianist, Vocal Coach,  
Composer



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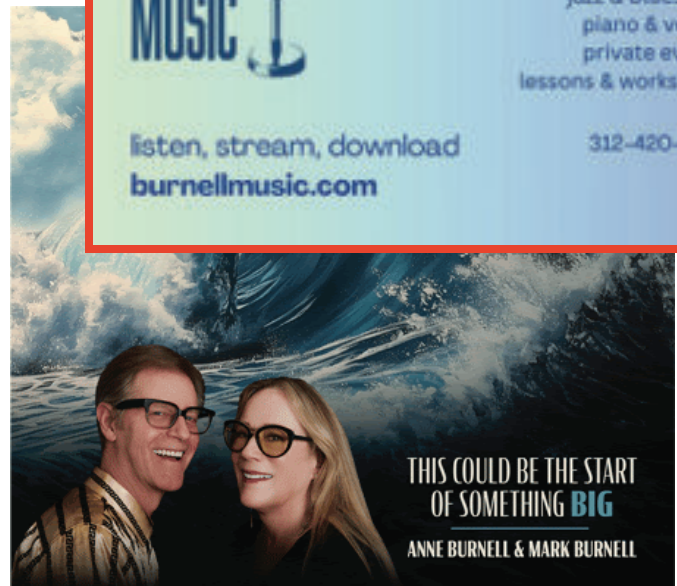


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**Anna Caldwell** is a Chicago-based soprano, writer, designer, and marketing associate with a passion for musical theater, opera, and jazz. She regularly sings with local companies and is a sought-after regional artist. Anna has performed with Chicago Fringe Opera, The Savoyaires, The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company of Chicago, and Actor's Moveable Theater. Recently, Anna portrayed the Narrator in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and Kate in *Kiss Me, Kate* at The People's Bank Theater in Marietta, Ohio; Krysia in Jake Heggie's *Two Remain* with Chicago Fringe Opera; and Rose in *Song of Singapore* with Actor's Moveable Theater in Athens, Ohio. She is a founding member and business manager of the Jazz vocal trio, the Peppermint Patties, and typically sings the top line in their three-part split. Anna has a M.M. in Vocal Performance from DePaul University and studies voice with Margaret Izard.

Polish American mezzo-soprano **Jules Furgal** is a recent graduate of DePaul University's Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance program, where they studied under the tutelage of Linda DiFiore. Recently, Jules performed with North Park University as Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito* and as Waitress in *Speed Dating Tonight* and Magda Goebbels in *Outside the Ring* in Bellissima Opera's 2024 Summer Opera production. Other performances include Laura Hildebrand in *Street Scene*, Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with DePaul Opera Theatre, and the Composer's Aria by Richard Strauss with the DePaul Concert Orchestra. In 2023, Jules was a Studio Artist at Musica Nelle Marche, performing excerpts from *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Cherubino), *Cenerentola* (Cenerentola) and *Falstaff* (Meg Page). While abroad, Jules obtained their A1 Italian Certification, and is actively continuing their German and Italian language studies. Jules is also fluent in Polish. Jules has attended workshops including Global Musician's Workshop studying folk music from around the world and Natalie Weiss' Musical Theatre Masterclass for Classical Singers. Upcoming engagements include performing with Valkyrie Ensemble in their production of Puccini's *Suor Angelica*.

Recognized for her emotionally compelling and dramatically effective delivery, soprano **Kelci Kosin** has earned national and international acclaim as a versatile performer. With an extensive repertoire spanning song, opera, and musical theatre, Kelci's performances have included Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Suor Angelica in *Suor Angelica*, Lola in *Gallantry*, Grace Farrell in *Annie*, and Miss Honey in *Matilda*. She performed the role of Trang in the Chicago premiere of Daron Hagen's *Amelia* and debuted Marjorie Rusche's *Middletown Chronicles*, which was broadcast on PBS. Additionally, Kelci premiered Dana Wilson's *Love Me Like a Beautiful Dream* for voice, horn, and piano, at the 51st International Horn Symposium in Ghent, Belgium, and Frank Ferko's *Cartes de la guerre* for voice and organ at the Sursa American Organ Concert. Recent premieres include Marjorie Rusche's *Songs of Love and Death* and Emily Sullivan's *Giver of Stars*, both presented at the International Music by Women Festival. Her concert appearances include *Carmina Burana*, Bach's *Cantata No. 51*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. Kelci is a full-time voice faculty member and Coordinator of Vocal Studies at Columbia College Chicago. She holds a Doctor of Arts in Music from Ball State University.

**Christine Steyer** is the 2020 Honored Artist of The American Prize for outstanding contributions to the arts. The soprano has received acclaim for her portrayals of Madame Butterfly and Violetta, and has sung in 40 productions at Lyric Opera of Chicago. She shared the stage with Lawrence Brownlee, members of the Chicago Symphony and Lyric Opera of Chicago orchestras, and was featured on WFMT's program Music Notes: Music of Healing and Peace. Steyer is an avid recitalist and producer, showcasing unique works by contemporary and women poets and composers. In 2021, she premiered the role of the Rio de Janeiro Health Care Worker in *On Call: COVID-19* and in 2022 premiered the role of Flanna in *Future Perfect*. Steyer served as librettist for these award-winning operas. She is Co-Founder of Working In Concert and Artistic Director of Bellissima Opera, and has brought music to 24,000 youths in underserved areas with Bellissima Opera's In the Classroom. She is on the music faculty at Concordia University in River Forest and teaches music at Ascension Catholic School in Oak Park, IL. Steyer has recently had an active performance schedule singing *Elijah*, *Speed Dating Tonight*, songs of Florence Price and Ernst Bacon, as well as presenting excerpts from her latest opera as librettist, *Outside the Ring*.

Collaborative pianist/coach and faculty at North Park University and a collaborative pianist at DePaul University, **Jennifer McCabe** has been described as "an infinitely sympathetic pianist". She was the pianist for the premiere of Philip Seward's operetta *High Fidelity* at the Royal George Theatre and the operatic quartet *Transcendence* by David Shenton and Christine Steyer. Jennifer was music director for North Park University's 2023-2024 opera productions, awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> place in its division by the National Opera Association in 2023. She has played in master classes and educational settings for Renee Fleming, Katelyn Lee, Ramsey Lewis, Elizabeth Futral, Jane Bunnell, composer Libby Larsen and

Michael Ehrman. Jennifer was coach/pianist for the Merit School of Music's "Renee Fleming Voice Initiative" in its first two years. An in-demand piano teacher for over 25 years, she was inducted into the Music Hall of Fame at Sycamore High School in 2020.

**Ava Logan** is an award-winning singer-actress. Dr. Logan, a graduate of Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania, is a veterinarian by day and a jazz singer at night! Internationally, the classically trained but versatile vocalist has performed jazz, pop, and rhythm and blues abroad and with tours in Minsk, Belarus, and Moscow, Perm, and Rostov, Russia; Paris and other cities in France; Rome, Italy and Accra, Ghana. In addition to many clubs, theaters and festivals in Chicago, she has performed in Sarasota, FL, California's Mendocino Music Festival, and throughout California. She has portrayed Ella Fitzgerald and Nancy Wilson at the Black Ensemble Theater in Chicago and produced and performed her own "one woman" shows at the Skokie Theater. She is currently performing a musical history/lecture "Cole Porter and Bricktop's Paris" in collaboration with Elizabeth Doyle, which debuted at the annual Cole Porter Festival in Peru, IN in June 2024. Ava appeared on CBS TV in Harry Porterfield's "Someone You Should Know" (thrice!). Her first major CD, "So Many Stars", has received national airplay and rave reviews! She is the 2022 recipient of the African American Arts Alliance of Chicago's Black Excellence Award for Outstanding Achievement in Music – Jazz. Ava is a proud member of Working In Concert's Cabaret Connexion and Black Voices in Cabaret. She is also a member of Chicago Cabaret Professionals.

**Elizabeth Doyle** is a multi-talented singer, pianist, composer, lyricist, music director, vocal coach and piano instructor. Her singing and piano playing has been featured at venues throughout the US and Europe, in Feinstein's 54 Below, the Metropolitan Room and Cafe Sabarsky (New York City); Au Lapin Agile, Studio Raspail and the Swan Bar (Paris); The Paradiso (Amsterdam); Schwartz Bock Hotel (Wiesbaden, Germany) and the famed Pump Room (Chicago). Elizabeth has performed on NPR's "Piano Jazz", BBC Radio, Dutch National Radio, WTTW-TV, and South Dakota Public Radio. She has written dozens of original cabaret, jazz and art songs which she and other singers have performed from Chicago to New York to Amsterdam. Elizabeth has also composed several theatre musicals including "Fat Tuesday," "Duo" and "Burnham's Dream" and "Sleepy Hollow," which was showcased at the prestigious Disney/ASCAP Theater Music Workshop with Stephen Schwartz in Los Angeles. An After Dark Award winner and Meier Arts Achievement Award recipient, Elizabeth has a thriving in-person and on-line vocal coaching and piano teaching practice. Her two CDs, "Elizabeth Doyle" and "Time Flies", are available on Amazon Music.

**Emily Nelson Taylor** (Visual Artist) is a contemporary painter known for her female-focused fantasy portraits. Growing up in Chicago, she often found herself escaping the city's towering buildings and concrete surroundings, immersing her imagination in the world of the fantastical. Her artistic journey began with a solo exhibition at a local gallery in the Chicago suburbs. The exhibition garnered attention, leading to additional showings across the city. Emily's distinctive style is defined by bold, vibrant colors and a strong focus on the female figure. Working primarily with oils or acrylics, she emphasizes dynamic lines and expressive forms. Her work often explores themes of womanhood and motherhood, capturing the evolving experiences of women across different stages of life. Currently, Emily is exploring the intersection of music and visual art. She is preparing for an upcoming exhibition that involves interviewing individuals about their favorite songs and translating their emotional responses into visual works. When not painting, Emily channels her creativity as a costume designer for opera, theatre, and dance companies.

Emcee **Claudia Hommel** (Executive Director and Treasurer of Working In Concert) directs the Chicago Paris Cabaret Connexion, SongShop workshops and concert productions. Claudia received her Master's in Library Science from Wayne State University and founded the archives of the Detroit Institute of Arts prior to pursuing a full-time career on stage, first in New York City, then Chicago. Actor-singer, teacher, cabaret promoter, Claudia brings her personal connections and passions to Working In Concert. Her recordings of *Paris/Paree*, *Paris in the Jazz Age*, *Romance Language: French Songs for Lovers*, and the two *Jazz Fauré Project* albums are a reflection of her Paris-centric repertoire. The Vocal Canvas concerts bring projections to the recital stage to "hear the painting and see the song". She is on faculty at the Community Music Division of DePaul University School of Music with SongShop, her ongoing class in song interpretation. She initiated the founding of Chicago Cabaret Professionals in 1997 and is a coordinator for the annual Chicago Cabaret Week, launched in 2022. She was presented La Renaissance Française *Médaille d'Or pour les valeurs francophones* (Gold Medal for francophone values) by the French Consul Général Cédrik Fouriscot in New York in 2024.

SAVE THE DATE for  
Bellissima's delightful Summer Operas

# *Midsummer Dream Fairies & Fables*

Pauline Viardot García's Opera  
***The Last Sorcerer***  
and highlights from  
Benjamin Britten's  
***Midsummer Night's Dream***  
with other fairy songs



**July 17 & 18, 2025, 7-9:30pm**  
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Artwork by Emily Nelson Taylor.  
Elements visualizing four stages of motherhood: Fire, Water, Earth and Air