

**BROOKFIELD  
PLACE**

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**ON SITE  
OPERA**

**SONG OF THE  
NIGHTINGALE**

**Music by Lisa DeSpain | Libretto by Melisa Tien**

Commissioned and produced by On Site Opera and Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture.

Thank you for joining us for the world premiere of *Song of the Nightingale*. Adapted from Hans Christian Anderson's *The Nightingale*, this modern-day fairy tale tells the story of a collector looking to gather up the world's most beautiful objects.

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LIBRETTO SUPERTITLES](#)

**SEPTEMBER  
8 - 9:  
BROOKLYN  
COMMONS**

**SEPTEMBER  
21 - 23:  
MANHATTAN  
WEST**

**SEPTEMBER  
28 - 30:  
BROOKFIELD  
PLACE**

## CAST

HANNAH CHO, Nightingale  
NICOLE HASLETT, Frog  
BERNARD HOLCOMB, The Curator  
ELIAM RAMOS, Cow  
CHRYSTAL E. WILLIAMS, The Collector  
YOHJI DAQUIO, Nightingale (Cover)  
JONATHAN R. GREEN, Cow (Cover)  
NICHOLAS HUDAK, The Curator (Cover)  
TERYN KUZMA, Frog & Mechanical Nightingale (Cover)  
RAPHAELLA MEDINA, The Collector (Cover)

## CREATIVE TEAM

LISA DESPAIN, Composer  
MELISA TIEN, Librettist  
KATHERINE M. CARTER, Stage Director  
KATY EARLY, Assistant Director  
SCOTT ETHIER, Orchestrator  
CRIS FRISCO, Pianist & Conductor  
KARA HARMON, Costume Designer  
TESS JAMES, Lighting Designer  
BETH LAKE, Sound Designer  
ALAYNA MCCABE, Stage Manager  
GEOFFREY MCDONALD , Music Director & Conductor  
SARAH ORTTUNG, Assistant Stage Manager  
GABRIELLE VINCENT, Hair & Makeup Designer  
ALEXANDER WYLIE, Properties Manager

## ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION TEAM

RUSSEL ANIXTER , Music Copyist  
KATE BAISLEY, Hair & Makeup Crew  
GEOFF PETERSON, Titles Operator  
JORDAN RICHARDS, Technical Production Support  
RICHARD ROCKAGE, Music Copyist  
SOPHIE STRATYNER, Costume Assistant / Wardrobe Crew  
DEENA ZAMMAM, Composer's Assistant

## ORCHESTRA

JAMIMI KIM, Piano  
JOHN ROMERI, Flute  
DAVID VALBUENA, Clarinet  
NIKITA YERMAK, Violin  
VALERYIA SHOLOOVA, Cello



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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- 4** PERFORMANCE SCHEDULES
  - 5** A NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
  - 6** CAST
  - 11** CREATIVE TEAM
  - 17** ABOUT ON SITE OPERA
  - 18** ABOUT BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES  
ARTS & CULTURE
  - 19** ABOUT OUR PROPERTIES
  - 20** MORE FREE ARTS & EVENTS AT  
BROOKFIELD PLACE
  - 21** LIBRETTO
-

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# SCHEDULE

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## BROOKLYN COMMONS PARK:

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8**  
12:30 & 5:00 PM | Performance

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**  
2:00 & 5:30 PM | Performance

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## MANHATTAN WEST PLAZA:

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21**  
12:30 PM | Lunchtime Preview & Talk with  
composer Lisa DeSpain  
7:00 PM | Performance

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22**  
7:00 PM | Performance

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**  
2:00 & 7:00 PM | Performance

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## WINTER GARDEN AT BROOKFIELD PLACE:

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**  
12:30 PM | Lunchtime Preview & Talk with  
composer Lisa DeSpain  
7:00 PM | Performance

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**  
7:00 PM | Performance

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**  
2:00 & 7:00 PM | Performance



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# A NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ERIC EINHORN:

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When we think about classic operas like *Carmen* or *La bohème*, we think about the music and drama that have captivated audiences for generations. We rarely (if ever) think about how these beloved works came to life. At On Site Opera, we have the privilege of being able to commission world premiere operas from some of today's most exciting composers. *Song of the Nightingale* marks our fifth commission, and we could not be more thrilled than to partner with Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture to bring this delightful story to life.

The project that would become this opera began with a conversation I had four years ago with Elysa Marden, SVP of Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture. As a site-specific opera company, we were so excited to partner with an organization built around bringing the arts into interesting, non-theatrical public spaces. With Brookfield Properties' robust portfolio of spaces across NYC, we jumped at the chance to create an opera not for one, but three amazing spaces! Producing the same show in three venues posed a new challenge for our opera commissioning process, though. Historically, we have commissioned a new site-specific opera for a specific space, allowing the story and score to connect directly with that venue. For this project, we had to shift our paradigm and aim to create something site-adaptive, meaning that the piece connects a bit more flexibly to each space, yet feels completely at home in every venue.

With these macro ideas in place, we turned to our intrepid writing team: composer Lisa DeSpain and librettist Melisa Tien. During early inspirational site visits about a year and a half ago, Lisa, upon seeing the dichotomy between the stunning urban architecture and the natural elements found in each space, immediately offered up Hans Christian Andersen's *The Nightingale* as a possible story to transform into an opera. The original story's focus on the power of music in the two worlds of the Emperor's Palace and the forest laid the perfect foundation for this commission. In the hands of Melisa Tien, the original tale of a misguided Emperor transformed into a timeless story of vulnerability and self-discovery.

In the span of a year, the opera was written and revised through workshops and feedback sessions with numerous artists and creative team members. All the while, On Site Opera and Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture shepherded the process, drawing on each organization's areas of expertise to get the opera rehearsal-ready. From there, our brilliant creative team (lead by stage director Katherine M. Carter and music director Geoffrey McDonald) guided our incredible cast towards the production you are about to see.

After years of hardwork and anticipation, we thank you so much for joining us and being among the first people in the world to see *Song of the Nightingale*. Whether you are a seasoned opera-goer or a casual passerby, I sincerely hope you enjoy the performance and would like to welcome you to the communities of On Site Opera and Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture.

**ERIC EINHORN**  
Artistic Director  
On Site Opera



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# CAST

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## HANNAH CHO

### Nightingale

**HANNAH CHO** (she/her) is a well-praised soprano with an innate passion especially for new music and art songs. Ms. Cho has performed in some of the world's most prestigious opera houses and halls, including the Beijing Grand Theater in Beijing, the Seoul Arts Center Opera House in Seoul, Harbin Grand Theater in Harbin, Carnegie Hall in New York, MuTH hall in Vienna, Lotte Concert Hall in Seoul, Goyang Aramnuri Theater in Goyang, Daejeon Art Center in Daejeon. Her repertoire is diverse, including works by Handel, Mozart, Massenet, Schubert, Wolf, Reimann and Puccini. She is particularly noted for her interpretations of New music, such as Reimann's and Huang Ruo's music.

Ms. Cho's performances have been praised for their emotional depth, technical precision, and sheer beauty. Her artistry has been recognized with numerous accolades, including 1st Prizes at the Beijing International Opera Competition, Korea National Opera Competition, Daejeon Opera Competition, German Lieder Association Competition, and grand recipient at Gerda Lissener Competition. Goldsmith Foundation Award and Michael Siska Opera Award.

She has appeared in many world premier operas such as Little Madame Shoes in *Red Shoes*, Nanako in *Dongju Yun*, and participated as Dierdre in the workshop *The Righteous*, and also has performed as Nedda in *Pagliacci*, Pamina in *Die Zauberfloete*, Calisto in *Calisto*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and covered as Violetta in *La Traviata* at Santa Fe Opera, Korea National Opera, Daejeon Opera, and Mannes Opera.

She has performed as a Soloist for Handel's *Messiah*, Andre's *Magnificat* and Thomas's *Please for the peace*.

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## NICOLE HASLETT

### Frog/Mechanical Nightingale

Hailed by The New York Times for her "technically accomplished coloratura" as well as, "floating lyricism," soprano **NICOLE HASLETT** (she/her) returned to the role of Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Arizona Opera, and reprised the role of Kristina in *Oceane* with Deutsche Oper Berlin. Her recent credits include: Gilda in *Rigoletto* (Opera Hong Kong, Lyric Opera of Kansas City); Adele in *Die Fledermaus* Berthe in *Le prophète*, Semele in *Die Liebe der Danae*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*, First Niece in *Peter Grimes*, and Frasquita in *Carmen* (Deutsche Oper Berlin); Ännchen in *Der Freischütz* and Chloé in *Offenbach's Daphnis et Chloé* (Heartbeat Opera); Adele in *Die Fledermaus* (Cincinnati Opera);

Carmina Burana (Toronto Symphony); Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Berkshire Opera Festival); Sophie in Picker's *Emmeline* and Echo in Smetana's *The Kiss* (Opera Theater of Saint Louis); title role of *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (Chautauqua Opera); and Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera in the Ozarks). She holds a Master of Music in vocal performances from the Manhattan School of Music.





## BERNARD HOLCOMB

### The Curator

Tenor **BERNARD HOLCOMB** (he/him) has already made a name for himself in the world of opera with his “delicate and flexible” voice (Opera Wire) and the “appealing sweetness and clarity [of] his tone” (The New York Times). Katy Walsh of Chicago Theater Beat said it best: “Although everyone [at Lyric Opera of Chicago] can sing, Holcomb reminds us why we come to the Lyric.” Last season, Mr. Holcomb made his Metropolitan Opera debut in Terence Blanchard and Michael Cristofer’s *Champion*, his house debut at Opera Omaha in *X, the Life and Times of Malcolm X*, and joined Central City Opera as Iago in *Otello*. In addition, Holcomb performed with On Site Opera as Harlekin in *Der Kaiser von*

*Atlantis*, and took part in the workshop for *The Pigeon Keeper*, a new commission from Santa Fe Opera. In concert, Holcomb performed Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* with Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra, Hailstork and Martin’s *A Knee on the Neck* with New York Choral Society, a holiday concert with the Cincinnati Pops under the baton of Mo. John Morris Russel, Jacksonville Symphony’s concert *Lush Life: Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn*, as well as Damien Geter’s *An African American Requiem* with Fort Worth Opera, after having appeared in its world premiere in the 21-22 season. Holcomb returns to The Metropolitan Opera this season for both *X: The Life and Times of Malcom X* and *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*.



## ELIAM RAMOS

### Cow

**ELIAM RAMOS** (he/him) is a thrilling Puerto Rican bass-baritone who has performed opera and concert works with companies in the United States, Spain, Israel, Puerto Rico and Mexico. His artistic engagements range from traditional opera such as Leporello and Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, to Luis Nogales in the zarzuela *Luisa Fernanda*, to symphony concerts such as *Fauré’s Requiem* to the title role of the modern composition of *El Cimarrón* by Hans Werner Henze.

After moving to New York in 2013 he has performed the role of Lord Sidney in Rossini’s *Il Viaggio a Reims* and Sparafucille and Monterone in Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, Ben in *The Telephone* and Balthazar in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by Gian-Carlo Menotti. Ramos’ international performances have been the title role in Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* in Spain, Leporello in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* in Israel and the title role of Hans Werner Henze’s *El Cimarrón* in Mexico.

The Metropolitan Opera Guild featured Mr. Ramos in their Verdi’s Baritones Serie in their 2022-2023 season. Mr. Ramos engagements for the 2023-2024 season includes cantatas with the Bach in Baltimore, Brahms’ *Requiem* and the Lord Nelson Mass with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, Masetto from *Don Giovanni* for Opera in Williamsburg, Sheriff in the opera premier *Fannie Lou, I’m Sick and Tired* by Richard Thompson for Trilogy: An Opera Company Belcore from *L’Elisir D’Amore* for Geneva Light Opera, Angelotti from *Tosca* in Michigan, Clif Hardin’s *Requiem* for his Carnegie Hall debut, as well as other solo and duo recitals in the New York area.







## CHRYSTAL E. WILLIAMS

### The Collector

**CHRYSTAL E. WILLIAMS'S** (she/her) current and future engagements include Nefertiti Akhnaten English National Opera, a return to the Metropolitan Opera for productions of *Carmen* and *El Niño* and a world premiere by John Glover and Kelley Rourke Carnegie Hall with American Composers Orchestra. She created the role of Rebecca Parker Charlie Parker's *Yardbird* for Opera Philadelphia and has since sung with numerous companies including Seattle Opera and Pittsburgh Opera. Chrystal has performed at venues such as Baltimore Concert Opera, Opera Delaware, Glimmerglass Festival, Opera North (UK), Bard

Summerscape, Birmingham Opera Company (UK) and Minnesota Opera performing roles such as Fricka *Das Rheingold*, Charlotte *Werther*, Linda in Weill's *Lost in the Stars*, *Carmen* (title Role), Carlotta *Die Schweigsame Frau*, Stewardess *Dove's Flight*. As a concert soloist, Ms. Williams recently sang Dett's *The Ordering of Moses* City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut under Yannick Nézet-Séguin in Bach's *Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich*, BWV 150. She has also performed with Cairo Symphony Orchestra (Egypt), Norrköping Symphony Orchestra (Sweden), Springfield Symphony, Boston Modern Orchestra Projects, Virginia Symphony, Lancaster Symphony Orchestra and New Jersey Master Chorale. She is an alumna of the Academy of Vocal Arts and holds a Master of Music degree in Opera Performance from the Yale School of Music and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Voice Performance from Carnegie Mellon University.



## YOHJI DAQUIO

### Nightingale Cover

**YOHJI CANTAR DAQUIO** (she/her)– arrived in America from the Philippines in 2013. Singing has defined her life since she was a toddler. She has had roles in operas and sung in many voice recitals and competitions. This year, she won first place for the Euterpe Music Awards in Berlin, Germany. This Summer, she was a young artist for the Classic Lyric Arts in France singing *Thaïs* from *Thaïs* by Massenet and *Marguerite* from "*Faust*" by Gounod. In May, She performed in the ensemble with OnSite Opera for their production of "*Il Tabarro*" by Puccini at South Street Seaport Museum in New York. She also debuted as The Queen of the Night from *Der Zauberflöte* by Mozart with Mannes Opera.

In 2022, she has won first prize for the Century Opera Aria competition. She performed with On Site Opera for their production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by Menotti. She started singing with Encore Opera previously known as Opera Providence since 2015 all throughout the New England Region. She sang in the Sergio Franchi Memorial Concert with the American Ballet Orchestra alongside Latonia Moore, James Valenti, and other stars. She is now finishing her Master's degree at Mannes School of Music under the tutelage of Mr. Arthur Levy and Cristina Stanescu.







## JONATHAN R. GREEN

### Cow Cover

**JONATHAN R GREEN** (he/him) is an American Verdi Baritone originally from Chicago and now resides in Harlem NY. He is an alum of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and studied with Richard Miller. Jonathan also attended Indiana University and the University of Kentucky and studied with Tim Noble and Dr Everett McCorvey. Jonathan has been a soloist with the National Choral (NYC) performing as the baritone soloist in *Carmina Burana*. He has internationally performed at the Semp Opera (Dresden), *Deutsche Oper am Rhein* (Düsseldorf), Teatro Massimo Bellini (Catania), Teatro San Carlo (Napoli), and most recently Teatro Regio (Torino). His operatic credits include the title roles of *Rigoletto*, *Falstaff*, and *Figaro* (*Mozart and Rossini*), *Scarpia* (*Tosca*), *Renato* (*Un Ballo in maschera*), *Guglielmo* (*Così fan tutte*), *Marcello* (*La Bohème*), *Crown* (*Porgy and Bess*), and *Germont* (*La Traviata*).



## NICHOLAS HUDAK

### The Curator Cover

**NICHOLAS HUDAK** (he/him), tenor, has appeared in opera and musical theater productions with Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Michigan State University, Sarasota Opera, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Bel Cantanti Opera and most recently one of the district winners of the Pittsburgh District of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. He has had the pleasure of being cast as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Cinderella's Prince in *Into the Woods*, Mr. Fiorentino in *Street Scene*, Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Alfredo in *Die Fledermaus*, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*, Tito in *La clemenza di Tito*, and most recently Tebaldo in *Bellini's I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. A native of Pennsylvania, he has received a bachelor's degree in music education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and an MMA and DMA in vocal performance from Michigan State University.





## TERYN KUZMA

### Frog/Mechanical Nightingale

Ukrainian-American soprano **TERYN KUZMA** (she/her) is a versatile performer and musician of classical, contemporary, musical theater, and folk repertoire.

This past year, she sang in her Masters Degree recital, *Songs of Strength*, at Bard Conservatory, and workshopped the lead role of H'ala in Layale Chaker's dynamic new opera, *Ruinous Gods*, which will premiere next summer at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC. Her recent performance credits include the title role in Leoš Janáček's opera, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, singing the role of Celia

in *Iolanthe*, and performing the role of Luisa in *The Fantasticks*.

Over the past five years, Teryn has been featured in performances with Hartford Opera Theater, Ohio Light Opera, UConn Opera Theater, Toronto Summer Music Festival, Berkshire Opera Festival, and the Ukrainian Art Song Project in Toronto. In addition to her emerging singing career, Teryn is also devoted to maintaining the art of the bandura and Ukrainian music. In these solo recitals and special performances, she brings together the unique beauty of bandura with her voice. Since moving to Brooklyn, she has been working alongside Zoya Shepko of the band, Korinya, to revive the New York Bandura School, and looks forward to many performances to come in NYC.

Originally from Connecticut, she began studying voice at the Hartt School of Music. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Connecticut and her recent Masters Degree from the Bard Graduate Vocal Arts Program. For more information and upcoming events visit [www.terynkuzma.com](http://www.terynkuzma.com)

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## RAPHAELLA MEDINA

### The Collector Cover

Lauded for her ability to "exquisitely set the scene" (Orlando Sentinel), Chilean-American mezzo-soprano **RAPHAELLA MEDINA** (she/her) is known for her honest, engaging performances and vibrant voice. This season, Raphaella makes her Winter Opera St. Louis debut as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. She will also cover the role of the Collector in On Site Opera's premiere of *Song of the Nightingale*. Most recently, Raphaella made role debuts as La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* and Clarina in Rossini's *The Marriage Contract* with Opera Orlando. In the same season, Raphaella also made multiple debut appearances as a soloist with the Villages

Philharmonic Orchestra, Orlando Ballet, and the UCF Symphony. A versatile performer, Raphaella feels at home across a wide range of repertoire, demonstrated neatly in the 2021-2022 season: she made her role and house debuts as Diana in the mariachi opera *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* with Opera Santa Barbara; covered the role of Beggar Woman in *Sweeney Todd* and sang the role of Mezzo Elder in Lembit Beecher's *Sky on Swings* with Opera Saratoga; and stepped in as a last-minute replacement for Rosina in the final dress rehearsal of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera. In addition to her work on the opera stage, Raphaella has been featured as a soloist in concert and recital repertoire with Florentine Opera, New Albany Symphony Orchestra, and the Leipzig Hochschule für Musik und Theater. She recently placed third in the Opera Tampa D'Angelo Competition. Raphaella is managed by Encompass Arts, LLC.



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## CREATIVE TEAM

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### LISA DESPAIN Composer

**LISA DESPAIN** (she/her) (composer) is an award-winning creative at the forefront of contemporary opera and musical theater. She is the recipient of a 2018 OPERA America Discovery Award, Rhinebeck Writers Award, and NEA Challenge America Award for her jazz/blues opera *That Hellbound Train*, based on a short story by Robert Bloch (*Psycho*) with libretto by David Simpatico, the 2020 Zepick Modern Opera Commission (Opera Kansas) for *Staggerwing* about the historic win of female pilots in the 1936 Bendix Trophy Air Race (libretto by Rachel J. Peters), and a 2023 New Music Creator Fund grant for *The Albany Garbage War* about the women of Albany, CA, who took up arms to save their community (libretto by Tony Asaro).

Additional commissions include *No Ladies in the Lady's Book* (Utah Opera), highlighting the lost stories of women who built the Transcontinental Railroad, and *Men I'm Not Married To* (Cleveland Opera Theatre), based on a short story by Dorothy Parker (libretti by Rachel J. Peters). Concert works include the oratorio *American Nativity* (New Haven Symphony Orchestra), *Rise & Fall* (Barlow Award, Cassatt String Quartet), and *The Bicycle Shoppe* (US Air Force Band of Flight, honoring the Wright Brothers' Centennial).

DeSpain's many honors include an Aaron Copland Fellowship, the ASCAP Commission Honoring the Duke Ellington Centennial, Eugene O'Neill Writer-in-Residence, and the Dramatists Guild Fellowship for *Storyville* with writing partner Oscar Award-winner Kristen Anderson-Lopez. DeSpain is the choral arranger of Broadway hits (e.g. *Hamilton*, *Funny Girl*) for Alfred Music and Professor of Music at LaGuardia Community College – CUNY. For more information visit [www.lisadespain.com](http://www.lisadespain.com)



### MELISA TIEN Librettist

**MELISA TIEN** (she/her) is a playwright, lyricist, and librettist. A resident of New Dramatists, she wrote the libretti for the operas *The Big Swim* (Asia Society Texas Center/Houston Grand Opera, 2024), *Forever* (Washington National Opera, 2024), *Family Heirloom* (Experiments in Opera, 2024), and *The Beehive* (University of Northern Iowa, 2023); she wrote lyrics for the music-theater works *Swell* (HERE, 2021) and *Daylight Saving*; she authored the plays *Best Life* (JACK, 2022), *Yellow Card Red Card* (Ice Factory, 2017), *The Last Mile*, *The Boyd Show*, and *Familium Vulgare*; and she co-created the podcast/auditory experience *Active Listening*. She has been published in the anthologies *Theater Artists Making Theatre With No Theater* (Tripwire Harlot Press, 2020) and *Modern*

*Music for New Singers: 21st Century American Art Songs* (North Star Music, 2021), and has authored essays for *New Music USA* and *Innovations in Socially Distant Performance*. She is a librettist with the American Opera Project's 2023-2025 Composers & the Voice Fellowship and Washington National Opera's 2023-2024 American Opera Initiative, and was a member of Berkeley Repertory Theatre's 2022 Ground Floor Residency Lab, Experiments in Opera's 2022 Writers' Room, The Assembly Theater Project's 2021 Deceleration Lab, a recipient of a 2020-2021 grant from the NYC Women's Fund for Media, Music, and Theatre, a recipient of a 2019 EST/Sloan commission, a 2016 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow in Playwriting/Screenwriting, and a member of the 2010-2012 Women's Project Lab. She earned a BA from UCLA and an MFA from Columbia University. Photo credit: Joseph O'Malley





## KATHERINE M. CARTER

### Stage Director

**KATHERINE M. CARTER** (she/her) is a stage director of theatre & opera. Based in New York City, Katherine travels around the world, bringing a consent and community-based approach to her work. From generative play and musical development to large scale opera, Katherine's expertise in various mediums provides a unique lens for guiding productions. Previous engagements include: Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Juilliard School, The Alley Theatre, Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Manhattan School of Music, Sarasota Opera, Mannes Opera at the New School, The Rose Theatre, Santa Fe Opera, On Site Opera, Carnegie Mellon

University, Rice University Opera, Parallel 45 Theatre. Fellowships include: New Georges, The Drama League, Wolf Trap Opera, and Playwrights Horizons.

Katherine is a certified Intimacy Director for theatre and opera, trained by IDC Professionals. This past season her work as an ID was seen at the Metropolitan Opera on the revival of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and the new productions of *Champion* and *Don Giovanni*. Upcoming, Katherine will create the intimacy for a new production of *Carmen* at the MET, opening New Year's Eve 2024.

Katherine's upcoming season includes revival directing Puccini's *La Boheme* at the Canadian Opera Company, Rogers & Hammerstein's *Carousel* with Intermountain Opera; Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* with Indiana University; and Puccini's *La Rondine* with Manhattan School of Music. For more information visit [www.katherinemcarter.com](http://www.katherinemcarter.com)



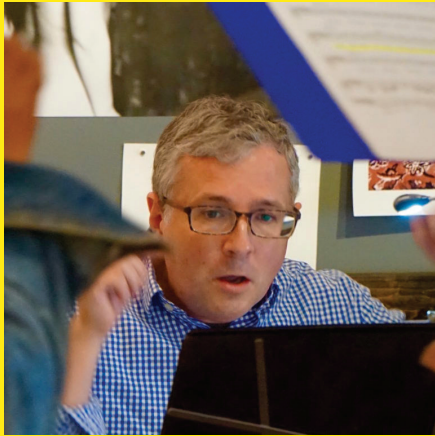
## KATY EARLY

### Assistant Director

**KATY EARLY** (she/her) – Equally at home in theater and opera, Katy is a stage director and current MFA candidate at Brooklyn College. She makes politically relevant and personally resonant work that endeavors to shift our communities away from violence towards care. Recent directing credits include *DUCKY* by Diana Lobontiu (Weasel Festival at The Brick Theater, 2023), *The Smallest Sound, in the Smallest Space* by Bryce McClendon (The Why Collective at The Cell Theatre, 2023) and a site-specific production of *La Traviata* (MassOpera, 2021). She holds bachelor's degrees in theater and vocal performance from Oberlin College & Conservatory and is thrilled to be working with collaborators in New York, New England and beyond.







## SCOTT ETHIER

### Orchestrator

**SCOTT ETHIER** (he/him) is a composer, pianist, and musical omnivore whose work draws on his background in jazz, classical music, and theater. Composer: Commissions/premieres/workshops of concert and theater work by Macon Symphony Orchestra (composer-in-residence), VocalEssence, Berklee College of Music, Playwrights Horizons, Two River Theatre, TheatreworksUSA, Queens Theatre, Theatreworks Silicon Valley, Kaufman Music Center, and La Mama E.T.C. among others. Music published by Boosey & Hawkes. Fellowships/Awards: Richard Rodgers Award – American Academy of

Arts and Letters, Dramatists Guild Fellow, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, New Dramatists Composer-Librettist Workshop Studio, BMI Musical Theater Workshop, American Composers Forum’s Continental Harmony Commission. Pianist/accompanist/orchestrator: Lincoln Center Theater, Kaufman Music Center, Mark Morris Dance Group, American Opera Project, and many others. Member: Dramatists Guild, A.F.M. Local 802. Latest: music for Messenger Theatre Company’s audio drama podcasts *The Dragoning* and *The Chip*, and for the documentary *The Arc of Oblivion* (Werner Herzog, Exec. Prod.). For more information visit [www.scottethier.com](http://www.scottethier.com)



## CRIS FRISCO

### Pianist & Conductor

**CRIS FRISCO** (he/him) is a collaborative musician equally at home in the worlds of classical and popular music. He is Director of Music and Director of the Handorf Company Artist Program at Opera Memphis. This season, he conducts *Hansel and Gretel* at Opera Birmingham and *The Falling and the Rising* at Opera Memphis and works on productions of Spears’s *The Righteous* for Santa Fe Opera and Kaminsky’s *Hometown to the World* for NYC’s Town Hall. He is the rehearsal pianist for vocal programs at the Philadelphia Orchestra and partners singers in recital in Los Angeles, New York, and Indiana. Currently in

development, he is the music director for Anatomiae Occultii’s contemporary dance production of *Sweeney Todd*. A committed educator for the next generation of artists, he is the Head of Music and Principal Coach for the Opera Program at Mannes College of Music and has served on the faculty of Westminster Choir College, Rutgers University, City University of New York, the New School for Drama, the Castleton Festival, the Mostly Modern Festival, Finger Lakes Opera, and Westminster’s CoOPERative. For more information visit [www.crisfrisco.com](http://www.crisfrisco.com)





## KARA HARMON

### Costume Designer

**KARA HARMON** (she/hers) OFF-BROADWAY: Public Theater: *Cullud Wattah*; Rattlestick Playwrights: *Lockdown*; Manhattan Theatre Club: *The Niceties*; Vineyard Theatre: *Dot*. REGIONAL (select credits): Steppenwolf: *Choir Boy*; The Children's Theatre Company: *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*; Arizona Opera: *Così Fan Tutte*; Santa Fe Opera: *Hometown to the World*; Old Globe: *Shutter Sisters*; Alliance Theatre: *Darlin' Cory*; Guthrie Theater: *Guys & Dolls*, *Steel Magnolias*; Milwaukee Rep: *Toni Stone*; Portland Center Stage: *The Color Purple*; Huntington Theatre: *The Purists*; Geva: *In the Heights*; Ford's Theatre: *The Wiz!* (Helen Hayes Award); Arena Stage: *Nina Simone: Four Women*; Geffen Playhouse: *Barbecue* (NAACP Award);

Oregon Shakespeare Festival: *Much Ado About Nothing*. TV/FILM (Assistant Costume Design): Amazon: *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, Season 2; Netflix: *Daredevil*, Season 2; HBO: *Boardwalk Empire*, Season 5. Harmon attended the NYU Tisch School of the Arts. For more information visit [www.karaharmondesign.com](http://www.karaharmondesign.com)



## TESS JAMES

### Lighting Designer

Tess James (she/her) is a freelance Lighting Designer and Associate. Her recent projects as a designer include *Assassins* and *The Cradle Will Rock* at Classic Stage Company, *The Running Show* with Monica Bill Barnes & Company. As an associate designer her work has included *Macbeth*, *True West*, *King Lear* and *The Color Purple* on Broadway as well as *Soft Power* at The Public Theatre. Throughout her career she has working with an array of amazing intuitions including BAM, New York City Center and New York City Opera. She is a full-time Lecturer at Princeton University and a Master Teaching Artist with Education at Roundabout Theater Company.



## GABRIELLE VINCENT

### Hair & Makeup Designer

**GABRIELLE "GABBIE" VINCENT** (she/her) is a New York based Hair & Makeup Artist. Her designs for opera include *Drowning* (Mabou Mines), *Gianni Schicci*, *Das Barbecu*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Murasaki's Moon*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *The Secret Gardener* (all with On Site Opera). In addition to having worked on 20+ Broadway productions, her hairstyling can be seen in multiple feature films and TV shows including *The Gilded Age*, *Miranda's Victim*, and (upcoming) *The Alto Knights*. Gabbie holds a BFA from the University of Miami, and a Certificate of Cosmetology from the Aveda Institute, NY.







## BETH LAKE

### Sound Designer

**BETH LAKE** (she/her): On Site Opera: Debut. Broadway: *Camelot*. Broadway Associate: *The Cottage*, *for colored girls...*, *Pass Over*, *Is This a Room?*, *Dana H*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Sound Inside*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Natasha Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812*, *Velocity of Autumn*. Off-Broadway: *for colored girls...*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *The Wolves*, *Freud's Last Session*. Off-Broadway, Associate: *Dreaming Zenzile*, *Socrates*, *Small Mouth Sounds*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Christians*, *The Qualms*, *Antlia Pneumatica*, *Skeleton Crew*, *The Wolves*, *Intimate Apparel*. Regional: *Into The Woods* (Guthrie), *A Little Night Music* (Pasadena Playhouse), *Kinky Boots* (Bucks County Playhouse),

*Selling Kabul*, *Ghosts*, (Williamstown Theater Company), *Kiss My Aztec* (Hartford Stage, with Jessica Paz), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (US Tour), *American Girl, Live!* (US Tour), *The Revolutionists*, *An Iliad*, *The Price* (Gulfshore Playhouse). Training: M.F.A. UC-Irvine; Affiliations: Member: USA829,IATSE-ACT, TSDCA

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## ALAYNA MCCABE

### Stage Manager

**ALAYNA MCCABE** (she/her) is an NYC Based Stage Manager and is thrilled to be working with On Site Opera for the first time. Her credits include: NYC: Juilliard; *Measure for Measure*, *Choreographers and Composers*, *New Dances* (Winder Edition), *The Agency*, *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*. Welcome to Campfire; *Subject by Memredux Labs*. Regional: TheatreSquared; *School Girls*, *Matilda*, *Passover*. Film/TV; *Let The Right One In*. Alayna holds a BFA in Stage Management from Ohio University and is an alumni of The Juilliard School's Professional Apprenticeship Program for Stage Management.

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## SARAH ORTUNG

### Assistant Stage Manager

**SARAH ORTUNG** (she/her) is a New York-based Stage Manager and is a recent graduate of the Juilliard Professional Apprenticeship in Stage Management. She is delighted to work with On Site Opera for the first time! Recent credits include NYC: Juilliard; *Proving Up*, *Choreographic Honors*, *How To Catch Creation*, *As You Like It*. Regional: Opera Saratoga; *Don Pasquale*.





## GEOFFREY MCDONALD

### Music Director & Conductor

**GEOFFREY MCDONALD** (he/him) is a dynamic presence at the forefront of America's contemporary opera scene, known for his "original and flexible musical imagination" (Observer) as well as his confident technical command on the podium. Described by The New York Times as "an agile conductor...whose pacing is sure in both reflective and restless passages," critics and audiences alike have lauded McDonald's musical sensitivity across an uncommonly wide range of repertoire, as well as his ability to build and maintain dramatic intensity over the course of an opera. A committed advocate and trusted interpreter of new

opera, he has led workshops and world premieres of operas for leading companies, such as Washington National Opera and Opera Philadelphia, working with prominent composers, including Jennifer Higdon, Kevin Puts, Missy Mazzoli, Nico Muhly, Lembit Beecher, Carlos Simon, Gregory Spears, and Kamala Sankaram, among others.

In the fall of the 2022-23 season, McDonald returns to Toledo Opera to conduct a double bill of *Suor Angelica/Cavalleria Rusticana* and rejoins the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia for a concert of baroque music featuring countertenor Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen. As Music Director of New York City's On Site Opera (OSO), a ground-breaking company that has earned the adulation of opera veterans and new audiences, he will lead two productions, including a revival of their critically acclaimed staging of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

Highlights from the 2021-2022 season include Grace McClean's *In the Green* at Mannes Opera, On Site Opera's immersive production of Gianni Schicchi, a performance of new works by Robert Patterson and Herschel Garfein for Mostly Modern Projects, and a return to Wolf Trap Opera for a production of *L'Amant anonyme* (Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges/Desfontaines after Mme. de Genlis).



## ALEXANDER WYLIE

### Properties Manager

**ALEXANDER WYLIE** (Properties Manager) Broadway: *Fat Ham*, *Into the Woods*, *Broadway Backwards 2023 - 2019*. Off-Broadway: *The Tempest*, *Richard III*, *Merry Wives (Shakespeare in the Park)*, *Plays for the Plague Year*, *The Vagrant Trilogy*, *Ain't No Mo' (The Public)*, *Light in the Piazza*, *Parade*, *Into the Woods (New York City Center)*, *Black Odyssey*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Macbeth (Classic Stage Company)*, *Bernarda's Daughters (The New Group)*, *Malvolio (Classical Theatre of Harlem)*, *This Land Was Made (The Vineyard Theatre)*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors (Onsite Opera)*, *I'm Revolting (The Atlantic)*, *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992 (Signature Theatre)*, *ONCE UPON A (korean) TIME*, *The Chinese Lady (Ma-Yi)*. Film: *TROY*. MFA: UNC School of the Arts. For more information visit [www.alexanderwylie.com](http://www.alexanderwylie.com)



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# ABOUT ON SITE OPERA

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Founded in 2012, New York City-based On Site Opera is the country's leading presenter of site-specific operas in non-traditional venues. Rooted in collaboration and storytelling, On Site Opera celebrates the connection between artist and audience through highly curated experiences led by exciting opera artists and bold and innovative creative teams. Each On Site Opera production invites New Yorkers to explore their city in new and unique ways, while cultivating a new generation of opera audiences. Since its founding, On Site Opera has produced nearly 30 operas in unconventional spaces, as well as numerous performances in schools and community organizations.

For more information visit [www.osopera.org](http://www.osopera.org).



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## STAFF

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EMILY BARBER  
Director of Production

KIMBERLY GIANNELLI  
Publicist

GEOFFREY MCDONALD  
Music Director

BOWIE DUNWOODY  
Marketing Manager

PIPER GUNNARSON  
General Director/CEO

POOJA SAHA  
Development Manager

ERIC EINHORN  
Artistic Director

ARTS FMS  
Finance Manager

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## ON SITE OPERA'S INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS

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THE ALPHADYNE  
FOUNDATION

**NYC** Cultural  
Affairs



Council on  
the Arts



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# ABOUT BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES ARTS & CULTURE

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Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture supports innovation in music, dance, theater, film, and visual art by pushing boundaries to create unique works of art and cultural experiences presented for free. Thriving for over three decades, the program gathers communities around creativity by animating Brookfield Properties' public spaces.

For more information visit [www.brookfieldproperties.com/arts](http://www.brookfieldproperties.com/arts)

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## STAFF

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Supervisor

**DALIS WILSON**  
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Executive Assistant

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## BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES

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Brookfield Properties is a leading global developer and operator of high-quality real estate assets. We are active in nearly all real estate sectors, including office, retail, multifamily, hospitality and logistics, operating more than 800 properties and over 375 million square feet of real estate in gateway markets on behalf of Brookfield Asset Management, one of the largest asset managers in the world. With a focus on sustainability, a commitment to excellence, and the drive for relentless innovation in the planning, development and management of buildings and their surroundings, Brookfield Properties is reimagining real estate from the ground up.

Learn more at [BrookfieldProperties.com](http://BrookfieldProperties.com)



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# BROOKLYN COMMONS

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Brooklyn Commons is a vibrant campus in the heart of Downtown Brooklyn featuring a thriving environment for business, education, dining, and year-round programming for the community with over 150 events and activations per year, free and open to the public.

Learn more at [brooklyncommons.com](http://brooklyncommons.com) | [@BrooklynCommonsNY](https://www.instagram.com/BrooklynCommonsNY)

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# MANHATTAN WEST

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Manhattan West is New York City's newest dynamic destination for food, culture, retail, hospitality and the modern workplace by Brookfield Properties. Spanning eight acres, Manhattan West is located in the center of Manhattan's new West Side, steps away from Moynihan Hall, Madison Square Garden and The High Line, with seamless access to the theater district, entertainment district, Chelsea art galleries, Meatpacking District and more. Home to diverse world-class office space, Pendry Manhattan West, luxury residences at The Eugene, experiential retail amenities, and unparalleled culinary concepts surrounding a landscaped, two-acre public plaza enlivened with immersive art and entertainment programming by Arts Brookfield, Manhattan West incorporates the best of Brookfield's global placemaking portfolio to create a new district that has something for everyone.

Learn more at [ManhattanWestNYC.com](http://ManhattanWestNYC.com) | [@ManhattanWestNYC](https://www.instagram.com/ManhattanWestNYC)

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# BROOKFIELD PLACE NEW YORK

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Brookfield Place (BFPL) New York is one of Brookfield's most iconic Place Making destinations that brings together modern office space, cultural experiences, curated dining and world-class shopping. One of New York City's most dynamic districts, Brookfield Place is a step away from the everyday and in step with the latest in global and local culture. The 14-acre, 5-building complex on the Hudson River in Lower Manhattan is home to some of the world's most innovative companies and one of New York's most celebrated experiential, culinary and shopping destinations. Brookfield animates its grand indoor and outdoor public spaces year-round through a mix of culture and events, bringing together a diverse array of New Yorkers and visitors. From waterfront cafes along the North Cove Marina to palm trees inside the famed Winter Garden, art installations to live music, Brookfield Place New York is a setting for discovery and inspiration, savoring and indulging, relaxing and socializing.

Learn more at [BFPLNY.com](http://BFPLNY.com) | [@BFPLNY](https://www.instagram.com/BFPLNY)



**BROOKFIELD  
PLACE**

SCAN  
FOR EVENT  
DETAILS



# FALL HAPPENINGS

## HUDSON EATS JAZZ

**WEDNESDAYS, OCTOBER 4 – NOVEMBER 15, 5 – 8 PM**

Back by popular demand, enjoy some of NYC's best jazz musicians and happy hour specials at this quintessential BFPL experience. Curated by The Jazz Gallery.

## HALLOWEEN BASH

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 12 – 3 PM**

Bring your costume-clad kids for a FANGtastic afternoon of activities, performances, and trick-or-treating.

## CANSTRUCTION

**NOVEMBER 2 - 13**

Explore unbelievable sculptures made entirely out of unopened cans of food. In addition to the sculptures, all donated cans of food will be given to City Harvest.

## LISA OCCHIPINTI: *A CLEARING IN THE DISTANCE*

**THROUGH NOVEMBER 13**

Reflect on the natural world while viewing three pieces representing the sea, twilight, and flora in the Winter Garden Gallery. The exhibit is curated by Common Ground Arts.



**SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE****Music by Lisa DeSpain, Libretto by Melisa Tien****Commissioned and produced by On Site Opera and Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture****Characters**

Bird — a virtuosic singer who has never been beyond the woods

Collector — a fickle heiress who collects objects while trying to fill her existential void

Curator — a longtime assistant; years ago he left home to pursue his dreams, and lost his way

Frog — a petty criminal who is woods-savvy, suspicious of humans, protective of friends

Cow — a closeted modern dancer who longs for the spotlight and tries to maintain a positive outlook

**Setting**

A mansion in the city

The woods

**Scene 1**

*The Collector's mansion. She admires her diamond collection while her personal Curator stands nearby.*

COLLECTOR

Red diamond.

Check.

Green diamond.

Check.

Orange diamond.

Check.

And now for blue.

*She places an extremely rare blue diamond on an empty dais.*

COLLECTOR

Another day, another collection complete.

No small thanks to you.

CURATOR

I am but a lowly curator.

Without your finances I would only be having

Imagined romances with beautiful things.

COLLECTOR

Without your expertise I'd be surrounded by fakes.

CURATOR

My dear, what may I assist you in collecting next?

COLLECTOR

You often say inspiration is all around us.

The other day I heard a bird in the garden—

CURATOR

You wish to collect birds...?

COLLECTOR

Yes! And only the best!

CURATOR

Perhaps we should aim for something a bit less complicated.

COLLECTOR

I have many collections.  
How is this any different?

CURATOR

I wonder if collecting animals is fair to the animals?

COLLECTOR

What a question!

CURATOR

A question worth asking, don't you think?

COLLECTOR

Everything wants to be gathered,  
Shown in a special light.  
Every thing wants to believe it matters  
And be flaunted shamelessly.  
Forgotten operas from way back when,  
Marble statues of naked men,  
A fabulous rooster, a marvelous hen,  
Everything wants to be seen.  
Would it be right for a beauteous bird  
To be hidden from view?  
Would it be right to deny it the chance  
To be loved by more than a few?  
Would it be right to prevent a collector  
From doing the one thing she can do?  
Of course not.  
Everything wants to be seen,  
Myself included.  
I ought to be trusted,  
Respected,  
Acknowledged,  
Encouraged to collect what I like.  
Selective hoarding is only rewarding  
When done without oversight.  
Then again if I didn't collect,  
What would I do?  
If I didn't collect,  
What would I have?  
Not a thing.

COLLECTOR (*cont.*)

Neither would you.

CURATOR

As always, you are right.

You're right.

I do know of a songbird

Who lives in the wood

Who is so good, she inspires tears.

I listened to her in my childhood.

COLLECTOR

That's more like it.

Let's go and find her.

## Scene 2

*The Curator leads the Collector deep into the woods.*

COLLECTOR

Can you believe that forest air?

CURATOR

Lovely, isn't it?

COLLECTOR

I've never smelled anything so fresh.

I can almost taste the wilderness.

CURATOR

I should come back more often.

COLLECTOR

This is another world

To a lifelong city girl.

*We hear the sounds of a Cow and a Frog.*

COLLECTOR (*cont.*)

Even the sounds are intriguing.

CURATOR

Take care not to tarry too long; we'll be stuck here.

*The Curator proceeds ahead. The Collector stays behind. More sounds from Cow and Frog.*

COLLECTOR

[*tries to imitate the sounds*]

*The Frog appears suddenly.*

COLLECTOR  
Hello!

FROG  
*(imitating)*  
Hello!

COLLECTOR  
What are you?

FROG  
*(imitating)*  
What are you?

COLLECTOR  
Are you mocking me?

FROG  
*(imitating)*  
Are you mocking me?

COLLECTOR  
...

FROG  
Now you know how it feels.

COLLECTOR  
I didn't mean—  
I apologize.

FROG  
I'll let it slide. This time.  
I'm what they call 'a frog'.

COLLECTOR  
I'm a collector.  
You might have heard of me.  
I live in a mansion above the city.

FROG  
I've never been outside the wood.

COLLECTOR  
I've never been inside the wood!

FROG

I hear they eat frogs in the city.

My cousin was boiled alive.

COLLECTOR

That's...horrifying.

You wouldn't happen to know if there's a famous performer in the area?

FROG

Behind you.

COW

How now?

*The Collector jumps.*

COLLECTOR

How did you—

COW

I'm a nimble cow.

FROG

*(of Collector)*

She's lost.

COW

Aren't we all?

COLLECTOR

Actually, I'm with a friend.

He's gone ahead.

I'm looking for a performer.

FROG

*(of Cow)*

He's a performer.

COW

Shucks.

FROG

Why don't you show her?

COW

Naw.

FROG  
Go on.

COW  
Okay.

*The Cow performs a brief, graceful, and rather moving interpretive dance.*

FROG  
(supportive)  
That was great!

COLLECTOR  
So great.  
I think I hear my friend calling.  
Nice chatting with you!

*The Collector catches up to the Curator, who is tiptoeing toward a brown bird.*

COLLECTOR (cont.)  
I met some interesting locals.

CURATOR  
Shh!

COLLECTOR  
Did you shush me?

CURATOR  
Keep your voice down.

COLLECTOR  
What is going on?

CURATOR  
If she hears us, she'll fly away.

COLLECTOR  
That cannot be the bird you were gushing over.  
She's far too plain!

*The Bird moves further away.*

CURATOR  
Look what you've done.

COLLECTOR  
This is silly. Clearly we're in the wrong place.



CURATOR

We're not in the wrong place.

COLLECTOR

I don't know why I let you drag me here.

CURATOR

You wanted to come!

COLLECTOR

It's humid and buggy and full of weirdos.

CURATOR

Fine! Let's go!

COLLECTOR

Thank goodness!

*They turn to go.*

BIRD

There's a story

I once heard

That takes place

In the wood,

About a bird

The animals knew.

Though her bright feathers were few,

Her voice was clear,

Her soul was true,

And she was beautiful.

Humans came

And heard her song,

And their tears ran free.

They looked and looked

And looked for the source,

Searching fruitlessly.

They looked past the bird

Too plain in their eyes

To carry the voice

They perceived.

When the humans withdrew

They never knew, never knew

The one beside them

Was the one they'd been seeking.

The nightingale had been hiding in plain view.

Though her bright feathers were few,

BIRD (*cont.*)

Her voice was clear,  
Her soul was true,  
And she was beautiful.

*The Collector and Curator are weeping. The Frog and Cow make their way over.*

COLLECTOR

I'm crying.  
You made me cry.  
How did you do that?

BIRD

I sing what's in my heart.

COLLECTOR

Will you come with me?  
Be a guest in my home.  
You'll live in luxury.  
You need only share your song.

BIRD

I'm flattered, but I'm happy in the wood.

CURATOR

Your voice could touch so many  
Who have not felt in so long.

COLLECTOR

I'll pay you for your talent.  
Name your price.

COLLECTOR + CURATOR

You need only share your song.  
You need only share your song.

BIRD

I'm flattered, but I'm happy where I am.

FROG

Yes! Stand your ground!

COW

What if this is the universe saying 'go out there and sing'?

COLLECTOR

Your true calling!  
Answer your true calling!

CURATOR

We in the cold, concrete city  
 Could use a dose of the wild wood.

COLLECTOR + CURATOR

You need only share your song.  
 You need only share your song.

BIRD

*(aside to Frog and Cow)*

Friends, what do you think?  
 I've never gone beyond the wood.  
 It might do me good.

FROG

Don't know them. Don't trust them.

COW

Seems to me you have an opportunity.

BIRD

Say more.

COW

What if you moved people to see the wood and its denizens for what we are?  
 More than animals?

FROG

To them, we'll always be lunch.

COW

I lived among humans when I was small.  
 Many are lousy. Not all.

BIRD

*(to Collector and Curator)*

Alright, I'll try it.

*The Frog pulls the Bird aside.*

FROG

You sure?  
 Something about these two strikes me as extra strange.

BIRD

If there's any hope of changing hearts and minds—

FROG

Humans aren't ready for change.

*(eyes narrowing)*

You sure that's all what you want?

BIRD

If there's any hope at all, I ought to go.

FROG

If you need us, you'd better let us know.

### Scene 3

*The Collector's mansion. The Collector and the Curator are having a private conversation, while the Bird is alone in a separate area.*

COLLECTOR

You haven't lost your touch.

Far and away,

This is the best investment I've ever made.

CURATOR

She seems distracted.

COLLECTOR

There's a lot to take in.

She'll settle soon.

CURATOR

Is it fair to keep her from leaving?

COLLECTOR

She knew what she was getting into.

CURATOR

At least let her go outside for a short while.

COLLECTOR

Per the contract she signed,

Once she writes a song and sings before an audience

We'll let her go out

On top of everything else we provide.

CURATOR

She requires a natural environment.

COLLECTOR

She lacks for nothing.

BIRD

Week one,

This is fun.

Week two,

Still new.

Week three,

Feeling free.

Week four,

Doing more.

Week five.

Overdrive.

Week six.

Feeling sick.

Week seven.

Depression.

Week eight.

Can't create.

Week nine.

Almost fine.

Week ten

Sad again.

Week one,

This is fun.

Week two,

Still new.

Week three,

Feeling free.

Week four,

COLLECTOR (*cont.*)  
Beauty is everywhere.

CURATOR  
Sometimes the most beautiful things  
Become ugly.

COLLECTOR  
I diasgree.  
We've worked hard on our collections—

CURATOR  
I'm not speaking of your collections.

COLLECTOR  
Then what?  
Me? This house?  
What else could there be?

CURATOR  
Never mind.

COLLECTOR  
I know what it is.  
You're frustrated.  
I am, too.  
You'll feel better when she writes us a song.  
You'll see.  
Soon.

#### **Scene 4**

*The Collector's home. An ad hoc performance space.*

COLLECTOR  
Good evening friends, neighbors.  
Many times you've heard us discuss  
Our latest collection.  
I'm pleased to say  
You can finally experience  
The stunning talent of its first and only member.  
Let us have a round of applause  
For our very own,  
Very special  
Nightingale.

*The Bird comes forward.*

BIRD (*cont.*)  
Doing more.  
Week five.  
Overdrive.  
Week six.  
Feeling sick.  
Week seven.  
Depression.  
Week eight.  
Can't create.  
Week nine.  
Almost fine.  
Week ten.  
Sad again.

BIRD

In this world,  
 There are two versions of me.  
 One made of paper,  
 One made of stone.  
 One folded,  
 Tucked out of sight,  
 The other displayed  
 And polished night after night.  
 Paper Me,  
 Softer than memory,  
 Knows only  
 Fresh air,  
 The wild,  
 And home.  
 The Me of Stone,  
 As hard as grief,  
 Sees no difference  
 Between despair and belief.  
 Who split me in two?  
 Did I?  
 Did you?  
 Two versions of me:  
 One folded,  
 Tucked out of sight,  
 The other displayed  
 And polished night after night.  
 Who will make me whole?  
 Who will make me whole?  
 Who will make me whole?  
 Will I? Will you?

CURATOR

One folded,  
 Tucked out of sight,  
 The other displayed  
 And polished night after night.  
  
 Who will make me whole?  
 Who will make me whole?

### Scene 5

*The woods. The Cow is mildly depressed.*

COW

Do you think she forgot us?

FROG

Not a chance!

COW

Do you think she'll return?

FROG

Of course.

COW

I hear it's nice where she is.

FROG

Lies.

COW

A magpie who visits the garden  
Says the house is full of treasures.

FROG

Or junk.

COW

You think?

FROG

Humans love to accrue junk.

COW

Maybe there's merit to junk?

FROG

For a day or two,  
Then they throw it away.

COW

What if value  
Isn't a thing you can touch?  
What if, like virtue, it's about  
What *you* deem is right or enough?

FROG

Junk is junk.  
Rules are rules.  
I didn't make them up.  
I can only be a frog.  
You can only be a cow.  
The sooner we accept it,  
The better for our mental health.

COW

Aren't you more than a frog?  
Aren't I more than a cow?  
What if the house is something more?  
What if humans are, as well?

FROG

I can only be a frog.  
 You can only be a cow.  
 The sooner we accept it,  
 The better for our mental health.

Aren't you more than a frog?  
 Aren't I more than a cow?  
 What if the house is something more?  
 What if humans are, as well?

COW

Where are you going?

FROG

To find our friend  
 And bring her back where she belongs.

### Scene 6

*The Collector's mansion. The Collector and Curator are anticipating a delivery. The Bird is in another part of the house.*

CURATOR

Something's on the way.  
 Something different.

COLLECTOR

I cannot wait.  
 I want to see it.  
 Want to hold it.

CURATOR

Something's on the way.  
 Something new.

I cannot wait.  
 I want to see it.  
 Want to hold it.

CURATOR + COLLECTOR

Something's on the way.  
 Something different.  
 Something new.

CURATOR

As soon as I was told  
 Of this piece  
 I thought of the collection.

COLLECTOR

I cannot wait.  
 I cannot wait.



CURATOR

I guarantee it is unique  
Among all that you've collected.

COLLECTOR

I want to see it.  
Want to hold it.

CURATOR

The next big thing,  
It will change everything.

CURATOR + COLLECTOR

The next big thing.  
The next big thing.  
The next big thing.

*The doorbell rings. A large package appears on the doorstep. The Collector runs to the door, brings it in, and starts to open it.*

COLLECTOR

I cannot wait.  
I cannot wait.  
I cannot wait.

*The Collector lifts up a mechanical bird. The Collector squeals with delight, and presses a button on it.*

FAUX BIRD

I sing for you.  
I sing for me.  
I sing this tune  
For all eternity.

*The tune is pretty. The Collector is beside herself. She presses the button again.*

FAUX BIRD

I sing for you.  
I sing for me.  
I sing this tune  
For all eternity.

*She presses the button again.*

FAUX BIRD

I sing for you.  
I sing for me.

FAUX BIRD (*cont.*)

I sing this tune  
For all eternity.

COLLECTOR

Bring me the nightingale!

CURATOR

What's the matter?

COLLECTOR

I want the nightingale!

CURATOR

Don't you like the song machine?

COLLECTOR

Nightingale!!!

*The Curator fetches the Bird. The Cow and the Frog tiptoe into the house. The Collector presses the button on the mechanical bird.*

FAUX BIRD

I sing for you.  
I sing for me.  
I sing this tune  
For all eternity.

COW

That can't be—!!

FROG

What have they done to her??

*The Cow and Frog look on from a hiding place as the Curator returns with the Bird.*

COLLECTOR

Let's hear both of you, together.

CURATOR

What is she supposed to sing?

COLLECTOR

Anything! Who cares! It will be wonderful!

*The Collector presses the button on the mechanical bird.*

FAUX BIRD  
 I sing for you.  
 I sing for me.  
 I sing this tune  
 For all eternity.

I sing for you.  
 I sing for me.  
 I sing this tune  
 For all eternity.

I sing for you.  
 I sing for me.  
 I sing this tune  
 For all eternity.

FROG  
 Stop! My ears are bleeding!

BIRD  
 My friends!

COLLECTOR  
 From the wood?

CURATOR  
 How did you get in?

COW  
 The same way we're getting out.

*The Cow and the Frog grab the Bird and run off before anyone realizes what's happening.*

### **Scene 7**

*Split scene between the woods and the Collector's home.*

BIRD  
 Forgive me, friends.  
 Can you forgive me?

COLLECTOR  
 No need to fret.  
 She was expensive to keep.  
 I prefer this one anyhow.

FROG  
 What happened?

BIRD

I was too keen,  
Seduced by things I'd never seen,  
A lush life.

*The Collector presses the button on the mechanical bird.*

FAUX BIRD

I sing for you.  
I sing for me.  
I sing this tune  
For all eternity.

COW

You could have sent word.  
We could have joined you.

BIRD

I could have.  
I forgot.  
I forgot myself, too.

COLLECTOR

Isn't this bird perfection?

CURATOR

Do you want the truth?

COLLECTOR

What kind of question—  
Lie to me.

FROG

You let down your guard.  
You let them trick you, trap you.

CURATOR

This bird is absolutely stunning.

COLLECTOR

Now, tell the truth.

BIRD

I thought I knew what I was doing.  
I thought I was in control.

CURATOR

I should not need to say

CURATOR (*cont.*)  
 What you know in your heart.

FROG  
 You were blind.

COW  
 From the spotlight.

COLLECTOR  
 Say what is true.

CURATOR + BIRD  
 I should not need to say  
 What I know,  
 What I know in my heart.

FROG  
 You were blind.

COW  
 From the spotlight.

COLLECTOR  
 Say what is true.

CURATOR + BIRD  
 I know in my heart  
 I was wrong to have stayed  
 Once I knew  
 It wasn't right for me.  
 I was a fool,  
 And paid with my liberty.  
 I know in my heart  
 I was wrong to have stayed.  
 I was wrong to have *strayed*.  
 I have saved of myself  
 What I could.

CURATOR  
 Now I return home,  
 Home to the wood.

*The Curator leaves the Collector's mansion.*

### Scene 8

*The Collector's mansion. The Collector is by herself. Correction: she is with the mechanical bird.*

COLLECTOR  
 Day one,  
 Nothing done...  
 Day two,  
 Kind of blue.  
 Day three,  
 Woe is me!

COLLECTOR (*cont.*)

Day four,

What a bore.

Day five,

Won't survive...

Day six,

What am I doing?

Who needs a Curator?

I've collected the best thing in the world.

*She presses the button on the mechanical bird.*

FAUX BIRD

I sing for you.

I sing for me.

I sing this tune

For all eternity.

COLLECTOR

So sweet and pretty!

*Again, she presses the button on the mechanical bird.*

FAUX BIRD

I sing for you.

I sing for me.

I sing this tune

For all eternity.

COLLECTOR

Is it me?

Or does it seem a bit dull?

*Again, she presses the button on the mechanical bird.*

FAUX BIRD

I sing for you.

I sing for me.

I sing this tune

For all eternity.

COLLECTOR

Oh!

What am I doing?

Have I messed things up?

I have, haven't I?

Little bird, did I screw up?

Tell me the truth.

COLLECTOR (*cont.*)  
Tell me the truth.

**Scene 9**

*The woods. The Curator, Frog, and Bird are enjoying a drink and applauding a new dance piece that the Cow has just performed for them. The Curator is more at ease than we've ever seen him.*

CURATOR  
Bravo!

BIRD  
Wonderful!

FROG  
You're a genius!

COW  
Shucks.

CURATOR  
There's an audience for this,  
If you want to pursue it.

COW  
Once upon a time,  
I might have said yes.  
Today, I prefer to keep it pure.

CURATOR  
Of course.  
There's no better, truer audience than Nature.

FROG  
Hear, hear.

COW  
Tell us, why did you leave?

CURATOR  
I had stars in my eyes  
For a city I'd never seen in real life.  
I once yearned to create with my hands.  
In the end, I turned to curating.  
I could no longer stand my own fears,  
Of failure,  
Instability,  
People.

CURATOR (*cont.*)

I grew used to dealing with *things*  
 And at most one fickle, difficult, person...  
 Bah, all that is past!  
 Here's to the wood,  
 May its incorruptible spirit—

COLLECTOR

(*o.s. from a distance*)  
 Hello?

CURATOR

Oh, no.

COLLECTOR

(*to herself; o.s. from a distance*)  
 Is this correct?

FROG

We'll take care of it.

*The Frog motions to the Cow; both move toward the voice of the Collector.  
 The Collector is alone and very lost.*

COLLECTOR

Do I go left?  
 Or did I miss a turn?

*The Frog and Cow appear.*

FROG

You again.

COW

You look like you could use a little help.

COLLECTOR

Yes! Thank goodness. It's been hours.

FROG

Too bad, we'll show you out.

COW

What she means is  
 You're not welcome in the wood.

COLLECTOR

I understand.



COLLECTOR (*cont.*)  
But this is important.

FROG  
So is keeping our turf free of predators.

COLLECTOR  
What??  
I'm not here to—  
I'm looking for my Curator.

COW  
He's gone.

FROG  
With the wind.

COLLECTOR  
Please.  
I can't do what I do  
Without him.

*The Bird appears.*

BIRD  
Why have you come?

COLLECTOR  
Is he here?

BIRD  
Say what you wish to say.  
We'll pass it along.

COLLECTOR  
I'm here to say  
I'm sorry.  
I thought I knew what I was doing.  
I thought I was in control.  
I should have made sure staying with me  
Was what you truly wanted,  
What both of you truly wanted.

BIRD  
Why must you collect?

COLLECTOR  
I've done it all my life.

COLLECTOR (*cont.*)

Dolls, marbles, figurines.

I was raised to stockpile sparkly things.

Not one object in my home is there

Because it inspires.

Not one has offered what I crave:

A deepening of the spirit,

A fattening of the soul.

The only time my hunger disappears

Is when I hear you sing.

Perhaps I can't comprehend inspiration.

Perhaps I'm not a true collector.

Perhaps I'm a lie.

BIRD

What would happen

If you ceased to collect?

COLLECTOR

I'm not sure.

*The Curator appears.*

CURATOR

You would be free to discover who you really are.

COLLECTOR

I knew it!

Come back with me.

CURATOR

I'm where I belong.

COLLECTOR

Name your price!

CURATOR

I am where I belong.

COLLECTOR

What will I do without you?

What will I do with myself?

BIRD

Listen for the music

Only you can hear.

Listen for a tune that

Only you will know.

BIRD (*cont.*)

Listen for the song  
That can only be felt  
In your heart,  
In your bones,  
In your soul.

COLLECTOR

Could there be anything else?

BIRD + COW + FROG

Listen for the music  
Only you can hear.

COLLECTOR

Perhaps...  
Perhaps I can give instead of receive.  
I'll gift my collection to the community!

CURATOR

No, I don't think that's necessary.

COLLECTOR

Then, what?

BIRD + COW + FROG

Listen for a tune  
That only you will know.

COLLECTOR

I can't trust myself to—

CURATOR

Listen for the music  
Listen for the music  
Listen for the music  
Only you can hear.

COLLECTOR

I'll listen for the music  
Only I can hear.

CURATOR

Listen for a tune that  
Only you will know.

COLLECTOR

I'll listen for a tune that  
Only I will know.

ALL

Listen for the song  
Listen for the song  
Listen for the song  
That can only be felt  
In the heart,  
In the bones,

BIRD

In the soul.

END OF LIBRETTO