

Arias Aloft: Gather Together
Opera + Community Studios | March 29, 2025

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two women performing aerial arts. They are suspended in the air, holding onto a vertical pole. The woman on the left is in a more dynamic, inverted pose, while the woman on the right is smiling and looking towards the camera. The lighting is a warm, reddish-orange hue. The text is overlaid on this image.

ARIAS ALOFT:
GATHER
TOGETHER

Arias Aloft: Gather Together

Opera + Community Studios | March 29, 2025

A collaboration between Circus 617, Boston Lyric Opera,
and Opera on Tap Boston

Featuring

Katrina Holden-Buckley – soprano
David Rivera Bozón – tenor
Claire McCahan – mezzo-soprano
Yukiko Oba – piano

Rachel Barringer – circus artist
Mandy Hackman – circus artist
Alexis Hedrick – circus artist
Ellen Waylonis – circus artist

Co-Conceived by:

Ellen Waylonis, Kathryn McKellar, and Sophia Herscu

Synopsis

Gather Together embraces the themes of community, connection, and finding one's place, as we watch a group of friends meeting again after time apart. This story of reconnecting with one another, rediscovering friendship, and rebuilding community all unfolds with acrobatic poignancy, magic, and mischief, set to a varied program spanning classic opera standards, contemporary art song, jazz standards, and folk melodies.



Erin Morley
Artist-in-Residence
April 4 & 5, 2025



~ Rose in Bloom ~

Erin Morley in Recital
Sat, April 5 | 7:00pm

Erin Morley, soprano
Gerald Martin Moore, piano
@BYSO Youth Center for Music

Program of Music

“Sul fil d’un soffio etesio” from *Falstaff* by Giuseppe Verdi
Katrina Holden-Buckley, soprano

“Tu n'est pas beau” from *La Périchole* by Jacques Offenbach
Claire McCahan, mezzo-soprano
Rachel Barringer and circus ensemble, contortion

“La danza” from *Les Soirées Musicales* by Gioachino Rossini
David Rivera Bozón, tenor
Circus ensemble

“Stridono lassù” from *I Pagliacci* by Ruggero Leoncavallo
Katrina Holden-Buckley, soprano

“Soledad” from *Soledad* by Rodrigo Prats
David Rivera Bozón, tenor
Alexis Hedrick, Cyr wheel

“Flower Duet” from *Lakmé* by Léo Delibes
Katrina Holden-Buckley, soprano and Claire McCahan, mezzo-soprano
Mandy Hackman and Ellen Waylonis, duo hoop

“The Alchemist” by Carol Koffinke
Note: The Alchemist was composed by local artist Carol Koffinke for
David Rivera Bozón, tenor.

“Round Midnight” by Thelonious Monk
Claire McCahan, mezzo-soprano
Rachel Barringer, multicolorde

“Wild Mountain Thyme” (traditional)
Claire McCahan, mezzo-soprano

“Dance for the Nations” by John Krumm
Ensemble
Aerial silks

“You'll Never Walk Alone” from *Carousel* by Richard Rodgers
All performers

*All are welcome to join in

Program Notes

Rather than providing text translations or supertitles, we offer these descriptions to highlight how each piece fits within the context of our program and the story it weaves.

The program opens with all the artists gathering in one space for the first time, playfully exploring the challenges of collaboration. Katrina gathers the group and sets the stage for magic with “Sul fil d’un soffio etesio,” from Verdi’s *Falstaff* where Nanetta, disguised as the queen of fairies, calls her companions to her side. The mood quickly shifts with “Tu n’est pas beau,” a playful yet heartfelt declaration from *La Périchole*, in which the title character humorously laments her lover’s many shortcomings—but adores him anyway. As this piece unfolds, Rachel Barringer’s tabletop contortion performance, with support from the circus ensemble, underscores the comic contrast in the music and highlights the whimsical nature of the aria.

Rossini’s “La danza,” from *Les Soirées Musicales*, is a lively tarantella that celebrates the joy of dance. As the energy settles, the artists scatter for the solo sections of the program. Katrina performs “Stridono lassù,” Nedda’s aria from *I Pagliacci*, in which she longs for freedom, envying the birds soaring above. Next, David presents “Soledad” from Rodrigo Prats’s *Soledad*, a poignant reflection on isolation, accompanied by Alexis Hedrick’s Cyr wheel performance—a striking visual metaphor for the cycle of loneliness and longing.

The program continues with the well-known “Flower Duet” from *Lakmé*, in which two voices intertwine to depict the beauty of nature, complemented by Mandy Hackman and Ellen Waylonis in a duo hoop act that celebrates finding harmony in partnership. David then presents “The Alchemist,” a contemporary piece by local composer Carol Koffinke, followed by “Round Midnight,” a jazz standard by Thelonious Monk, evoking the solitude of the late hours. Rachel Barringer’s multichord act complements the reflective mood, offering a visual representation of the piece’s introspective tone.

The final section of the program highlights folk songs—music traditionally sung by communities to bring people together. In this spirit, the artists reunite onstage. “Wild Mountain Thyme,” a Scottish/Irish ballad, reflects on love and the changing seasons. “Dance for the Nations,” by John Krumm, is a rhythmic, a cappella piece rooted in communal song, paired with a group silks act on two fabrics, visually echoing the unity and movement of the music.

Our performance concludes with “You’ll Never Walk Alone” from *Carousel* by Richard Rodgers. We invite all who know the song to join in, closing the program with its powerful message—a reminder of resilience, solidarity, and the power of music and movement to bring people together.

You'll Never Walk Alone

When you walk through a storm
Hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark.

At the end of the storm
There's a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of a lark.

Walk on through the wind,
Walk on through the rain,
Though your dreams be tossed and blown.

Walk on, walk on,
With hope in your heart,
And you'll never walk alone!
You'll never walk alone.

**RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S
CAROUSEL**

APRIL 4-13

**ARIAS ALOFT:
RISING WATERS,
RISING VOICES**

APRIL 27

**BRITTEN'S
NOAH'S FLOOD**

MAY 3

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Cast and Creatives



David Rivera Bozón

David Rivera Bozón (he/him) is a Colombian tenor based in Boston. He has a thriving international performance career, being recognized for his extraordinary talent and warm personality. Bozón has performed the main tenor roles in the operas *Siren Song* by Jonathan Dove; *Florencia en el Amazonas* by Daniel Catán; *L'amico Fritz* by Pietro Mascagni; *L'elisir d'amore* by Gaetano Donizetti; *La traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi; the following Puccini operas: *La bohème*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Tosca*; and the following Mozart operas: *Die Zauberflöte*, *Idomeneo*, *La finta giardiniera*, and *Don Giovanni*. David is pursuing his studies at the Opera Institute of Boston University. He holds a Master of Music and Graduate Diploma in vocal performance from the New England Conservatory, and a bachelor's degree from the National University of Colombia.



Katrina Holden Buckley

Katrina Holden-Buckley (she/her) is known for a silvery lyric voice and a depth in her approach to musical text. A "dramatic" performer with a "strong voice" (Boston Theater Review), Katrina has performed on the stages of Boston Lyric Opera, Odyssey Opera, Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Boston Opera Collaborative, and NEMPAC. Her debut in *Der Rosenkavalier* with Connecticut Lyric Opera was lauded by the press: "... as Sophie, Holden was perfectly cast, teenage-fresh in both character and voice, making the most of the ringing top to ensembles given to her role." Other operatic stage highlights include Musetta in *La bohème*, the title role in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Beth in Adamo's *Little Women*, Charlotte in *A Little Night Music*, and Frasquita in *Carmen*. Katrina was a finalist in the "Talents of the World" Competition in Greater Boston in 2018 and was a finalist in the Jenny Lind Competition in Bridgeport, CT in 2012. As an author, Katrina has been published in *The Theatre Times*, *The Arts Fuse*, *Classical Singer Magazine*, *Boston Singers' Resource*, and the *Réapparition Journal*. Katrina holds a Master of Music from New England Conservatory. She received her BA in music and English from Muhlenberg College. She studies with Elisabeth Phinney.



Claire McCahan

Mezzo-soprano Claire McCahan (she/her) is regarded as a musician of sincerity and versatility, delivering compelling and honest performances spanning baroque, recital, opera, and contemporary repertoire. Claire focuses her music-making on an embodiment of narrative to build connections with audiences and create meaningful musical experiences. She is an advocate for all creative voices and believes, now more than ever, in celebrating art's collaborative nature and its capacity to cultivate relationships—with our past, present, and one another. Claire is an award-winning recitalist and oratorio singer, as well as an interdisciplinary artist, pursuing projects that synthesize music with the interrelationships of our inner and outer landscapes. Performance highlights include appearances with the Tanglewood Festival of Music, Opera Saratoga, the Silesian Philharmonic, Compass Resonance Ensemble, Catalyst New Music, the American Bach Soloists Academy, and the New Hampshire Music Festival. For more information, please visit clairemccahan.com.



Rachel Barringer

Rachel Barringer (she/her) is a contortionist and aerialist based in New England. She performs on aerial hoop, mini hoop, silks, rope, multi-codes, and aerial straps. She is one half of DuoShadow with Caroline Wright, and they perform on duo hoop and duo braided loops. In 2023 DuoShadow created, co-produced, and performed *HELIX*, their first full-length circus show in collaboration with Circus 617 and Contemporary Circus Immersive Arts Center in Troy, NY. Rachel has performed nationally with Shanghai Circus, Boston Circus Guild, Santa's Circus, Cirque De Light, CirqOvation, Moisture Festival, Nimble Arts, and more. She is also one of five founding members of Circus 617, a contemporary circus company based in Boston. Rachel is a senior coach at Esh Circus Arts, and she also coaches at Eastern Acrobatics and Circus and Commonwealth Circus Center.



Mandy Hackman

Mandy Hackman (she/her) is an aerialist, dancer, choreographer and a founding member of Circus 617. She has performed on stages across the US and beyond: highlights include 617's productions in Boston and the Northeast, immersive works with Control Group and Rainbow Militia in Denver, dancing with Sinecdoche Dance, SAWtooth Dance, Mike Kelley, and others in NYC, flying high at the Kennedy center with Frequent Flyers Productions, and as a guest circus artist at Darpana, India, and Casa Chango, Mexico. Mandy has created her own dance-theater work as the founder/director of Tree Project and Shapeshifter collective, which toured throughout the US. She has created choreographic commissions for many dance, theater, and circus companies, and has been a featured artist at the Aerial Dance Festival and Excessive Realness Dance Festival. Offstage, you can find her coaching at Esh Circus Arts & Commonwealth Circus Center, and sharing her love of functional movement as the founder of body inclusive strength and posture service, All Our Bodies.

Cast and Creatives



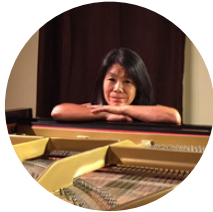
Alexis Hedrick

Alexis Hedrick (she/her) is a Boston-based circus artist known for her powerful, captivating performances. Inspired by circus shows she saw as a kid in California, she left competitive gymnastics at age 11 to run away with— well, carpool to— Splash Circus and then the San Francisco Youth Circus. She learned everything from aerial and acrobatics to juggling and physical theater, and fell in love with circus. Alexis attended the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) in Melbourne, Australia, specializing in aerial rope and Cyr wheel. Since then, she has performed all over the world with Cirque Bouffon, P&O Australia Cruises, Shanghai Circus, AIDA Cruises, Flynn Creek Circus, and All Wheels Sports. Locally, Alexis frequently performs for shows and private events with the Boston Circus Guild, teaches at Esh Circus Arts and Commonwealth Circus Center, and she is a co-founding member of Circus 617. She co-created and performed in the collective's first evening length contemporary circus show, *Gathering the Threads*, has appeared in Circus 617's ongoing *Mixtape* and *Arias Aloft* series, and is thrilled to be back for another Circus 617 collaboration!



Ellen Waylonis

Ellen Waylonis (she/her) is a Boston-based multi-disciplinary circus artist, choreographer, creative producer, and intimacy director, and is a founding member of Circus 617. She has toured nationally with Circus 617, Boston Circus Guild, Cirque Productions, and Nimble Arts. Locally, she has performed and completed choreographic commissions for organizations including *Celebrity Series of Boston*, the Peabody Essex Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. She was a 2021 Live Arts Boston grantee with Circus 617, a 2024 Creative and Independent Producers Alliance Fellow, and is a 2025 Next Steps for Boston Dance grantee. As a movement artist, Ellen creates work that subverts gender roles in circus, uplifts queer identity, and reimages a world where human interactions center kindness. Ellen is co-founder and CEO of the circus school Esh Circus Arts in Somerville, MA, and in 2017 she was a member of the founding team for Commonwealth Circus Center in Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood.



Yukiko Oba

Yukiko Oba (she/her) has performed extensively as an accompanist for recitals, choruses, master classes, and composers' projects. Ms. Oba is a graduate of Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo. She has been a member of the accompanying staff at Boston Conservatory at Berklee since 1996 and has performed with many acclaimed Boston area singers. She has participated in the MIT concert choir since the fall of 2016 alongside conductor Dr. William Cutter, worked with the Worcester Schubertiad, and has worked with the Metropolitan Opera Guild. Most recently, she performed Nico Muhly's pieces for countertenor with the Beth Morrison Project at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Ms. Oba resides in Weymouth, MA with her daughter and husband with whom she frequently plays four-hand piano pieces.



Sophia Herscu

Sophia Herscu (she/her) is an artist and educator dedicated to creating opportunities for learning and performance in circus arts and aerial dance. Whether in the classroom or on the stage, she has always been interested in pushing athletic rigor, exploring human perspectives, and telling stories in three-dimensional space. In 2011 Sophia was awarded a Watson Fellowship to conduct a year-long study of social circus. Impacted by this study and the power of social circus she decided to run away to the circus herself! She attended the accredited Professional Training Program at Frequent Flyers in Boulder, Colorado where she developed her choreographic voice under the mentorship of Nancy Smith and later with Iluminar Aerial under the mentorship of Emmy Moon. Sophia received BAs in theatre/dance and sociology from Colorado College in 2011 and earned her Ed.M. in arts in education from Harvard University in 2015. As the owner and co-founder of Commonwealth Circus Center and as a board member of Circus Up, Sophia is committed to increasing access to high-quality circus arts education across the city of Boston. She creates impactful evening-length shows that inspire conversation through her work with Circus 617 and with northeast-based Spoke Movement Ensemble.



Kathryn McKellar

Kathryn McKellar (she/her) is a multifaceted operatic soprano, educator, and arts leader, widely recognized as a passionate interpreter of opera, concert and theatrical works ranging from Baroque to contemporary. Praised by *The Boston Globe* for her "elegant singing" and "polish," she has performed with Boston Lyric Opera, The Boston Pops, Lyric Stage Company of Boston, and Boston Modern Orchestra Project. In 2024, she made her debut with Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, earning acclaim as a "vocal standout," with critics describing her performance as "ethereal and captivating" and *The Boston Globe* calling her "jaw-droppingly talented." As an arts leader, Kathryn is the General Director of Opera on Tap Boston, driving the chapter's decade-long mission to integrate opera into the community. Since 2012, she has forged innovative partnerships, secured major grant funding, and expanded opera into unconventional spaces, dramatically increasing audience engagement. Kathryn holds a Master of Music from Boston Conservatory where she was a member of the Opera Studio and the winner of the Conservatory's Chamber Music Honors Competition. She serves on the Board of the Boston Opera Alliance. Originally from Dallas, Texas, Kathryn resides in Somerville with her husband and two children.

Special thanks to

Jen Ender
Commonwealth Circus Center
Esh Circus Arts
Colleens of Medford
Russ Anderson
Boston Singers Resource

For more information and upcoming events please visit

www.blo.org
www.circus617.com
www.operaontapboston.com

Opera on Tap Spring 2025

May 24 Buzzing B's and High C's
The Somerville Community Growing Center

May 31 Flowers and Opera
Coolidge Corner, Brookline

June 7 Pride Trivia Cabaret
Club Cafe, Boston

www.operaontapboston.com

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Arias Aloft: Midsummer Magic

June 29
deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum

July 13
New England Botanical Garden
at Tower Hill



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