

ON SITE OPERA & HARLEM OPERA THEATER PRESENT GERSHWIN'S

# BLUE MONDAY



## PROGRAM MENU:

Cast, Production Team and Orchestra | Program Notes | Artist Bios

About On Site Opera | About Harlem Opera Theater

About The Harlem Chamber Players | Special Thanks

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

**On Site Opera & Harlem Opera Theater invite you to take  
a trip back to the roaring twenties as they present George  
Gershwin's *Blue Monday* at the Cotton Club.**

# BLUE MONDAY

**A JAZZ OPERA BY GEORGE GERSHWIN**

**LIBRETTO BY BUDDY DESYLVA**

**JUNE 18-20, 2013 | THE COTTON CLUB**

**7PM: DANCING & COCKTAILS | 8PM: *BLUE MONDAY***

## CAST:

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

**MIKE, THE CLUB OWNER**

**CLAYTON MATHEWS**

**SAM, A CLUB EMPLOYEE**

**ALVIN CRAWFORD**

**TOM, THE CLUB HEADLINER**

**LAWRENCE CRAIG**

**VI, JOE'S GIRLFRIEND**

**ALYSON CAMBRIDGE**

**JOE, A GAMBLER**

**CHASE TAYLOR**

## DANCERS:

**SARITA ALLEN**

**ELIJAH ISHMAEL AVRAHAM**

**NICCO ANNAN**

**AZAMA BASHIR**

**MAHALIA LEOLA MAYS**

**RAPHAEL THOMAS**



# PRODUCTION TEAM:

CONDUCTOR

STAGE DIRECTOR

CHOREOGRAPHER

COSTUME DESIGNER

LIGHTING DESIGNER

HAIR & MAKE-UP DESIGNER

PRODUCER

FIGHT COORDINATOR

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

PRE-SHOW DANCE COORDINATOR

GREGORY HOPKINS

ERIC EINHORN

GEORGE FAISON

CANDIDA K. NICHOLS

SHAWN KAUFMAN

SHANNON HARRINGTON

JESSICA KIGER

SHAD RAMSEY

AUDREY CHAIT

NATALIE DAVIDZON

# ORCHESTRA:

## THE COTTON CLUB ALL STARS

FLUTE/TENOR SAX: JAMES STEWART

OBOE/ALTO SAX: ED PAZANT

CLARINET/ALTO SAX: CRIS HEMMINGWAY

TENOR SAX: JOHN SIMON

BASSOON/BARITONE SAX: RAY JOHNSTON

TRUMPET I: AL PAZANT

TRUMPET II: MAC GOLLEHON

TROMBONE I: TIM WILLIAMS

TROMBONE II: ROBERT STRINGER

PIANO: NORIKO KAMO

BASS: STAN THOMPSON

GUITAR: SOLOMON HICKS

DRUMS: ELI FONTAINE

## THE HARLEM CHAMBER PLAYERS:

VIOLIN I: MONICA DAVIS

VIOLIN II: CHARLENE BISHOP

VIOLA: ADAM HILL

CELLO: LAWRENCE ZOERNIG

**Please be aware that live gunshots are used in this production.**

*Used by arrangement with European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canadian agent for George and Ira Gershwin Music, publisher and copyright owner.*

[Back to menu](#)

# PROGRAM NOTE

BY WILLIAM BERGER

In 1922, the 23-year-old George Gershwin was already creating a name for himself in the New York music world of Tin Pan Alley. Songsmiths of this milieu were expected to churn out quantities of ditties for any occasion, and especially for the “revue” style of Broadway shows. Before the advent of radio, these “juke-box” style Broadway shows were the best known method of making popular hits. Gershwin already had a national hit birthed through this system with the 1919 song “Swanee”, a sensation when Al Jolson sang it (somewhat incongruously, since dramatic cohesion was not a priority in these shows) in his show *Sinbad*.

Gershwin’s frequent lyricist Buddy DeSylva (later one of the co-founders of Columbia Records) pitched a tempting idea to Gershwin: a one-act miniature opera to be included in the most elaborate Revue of the time, *George White’s Scandals*. It would be a riff on one of the most successful operas of recent times, Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci*, in which a jealous clown murders his adulterous wife during a comic performance. But a truly intriguing prospect of the proposal was the setting of the drama: a Harlem nightclub, with unsavory characters found in such a place (but performed by whites in blackface, a convention of the time). Gershwin leapt at the idea of moving beyond Tin Pan Alley’s 3-minute hit song format. But how were they to get such a project on Broadway and into George White’s next production, *The Scandals of 1922*?

The music director of *Scandals* was Paul Whiteman, who liked jazz and saw its box office potential. Whiteman also appreciated novelty, convinced that New York audiences valued it above any other asset (including quality). Whiteman often emphasized his work’s novelty, even exaggerating it. He later put together a jazz concert at New York’s august Carnegie Hall, which was creative and dynamic but was not the first time jazz had been heard there, as Whiteman was saying. And in 1925, he would conduct the world premiere of Gershwin’s jazz-inflected piano concerto, *Rhapsody in Blue*, advertising it as yet another wholly new amalgamation of the classical and jazz worlds. Jazz had already made it to Broadway, most notably in the 1921 show *Shuffle Along* with music by Eubie Blake and performed by a black cast (including, at various points, Florence Mills and Josephine Baker). *Shuffle Along* was a huge hit, and Whiteman thought a modified form of that success could have a place in the very mainstream *Scandals*.

# PROGRAM NOTE

Producer George White was less enthusiastic, only giving his consent two or three weeks before the out-of-town tryouts began in New Haven. Gershwin set to work in a fever, completing the score in five days and developing a nervous condition he later called “composer’s stomach” during this time. The New Haven audience was enthusiastic about the piece, entitled *Blue Monday*. Gershwin recalled one critic saying that the show would be imitated – in a hundred years.

Truly, it was a lot for the audience to digest at first. The story concerned a woman jealously (and wrongfully, as it turns out) murdering her lover in an Uptown nightclub, amid an ambience of sex, drugs, illegal booze, and of course, jazz. Live piano on stage alternated with orchestral crescendos worthy of the opera house (if performed by a smaller orchestra). Similarly, the vocals ranged from street-smart chatter to soaring operatic exclamations. After a few tryout performances in New Haven, the show moved to Broadway – and *Blue Monday* only lasted a single performance. Specifically, the tragic ending seemed out of place with the foot-tapping, high-kicking ambience of the rest of the *Scandals*. A few revivals were attempted in various venues over the years (often under the revised title 135<sup>th</sup> Street), but Gershwin soon left it alone, moving on to other projects. Only in recent years has interest in *Blue Monday* rekindled.

The disparity between *Blue Monday*’s enthusiastic reception in New Haven and its flop on Broadway says much about the role of context in appreciating – or even comprehending – this piece. *Blue Monday*’s contrast with other Broadway offerings was more glaring in Times Square. *Shuffle Along* had proven that it was possible to connect Harlem to Broadway, but *Blue Monday* added additional complications. It was ostentatiously claiming to be authentically jazz, vaudeville, and opera, of all things – and “grand” opera at that (as a character in a sort of prologue to the piece spells out). This blend of scruffy, glamorous, and commercial was too great a burden to bear.

The first opera of the grittily realistic “verismo” style, Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana* (a “big brother” to the similarly verismo *Pagliacci*, two years younger) had dared something similar. It claimed the exalted emotions of grand opera’s noble personages for crude peasants, and made it exciting enough to resonate even today. Submitting the same lofty claim for the rough trade of a Harlem nightclub to the fun-seeking audience of Broadway didn’t stand a chance in 1922.

# PROGRAM NOTE

After an initial storm of condescension from critics, *Blue Monday* became known, if at all, only for its role in Gershwin's development. The obvious progeny of *Blue Monday* is the great (and truly "grand") opera *Porgy and Bess*, which opened on Broadway with similar contextual challenges 13 years later but came to be acknowledged as a masterpiece. The African-American cast of characters and the musical score including a superb mélange of influences (including jazz, blues, classical, and – not least – traditional music of the Eastern European Jewish world) are striking common factors of both works.

The kinship between *Blue Monday* and Gershwin's most famous composition, *Rhapsody in Blue*, is only slightly less obvious, even beyond the Paul Whiteman connection and the evocative color choice shared by both titles. Indeed, the closing chords of *Blue Monday* sound very much like the end of *Rhapsody in Blue*, but it's the boldly self-conscious smash-up of classical and jazz styles that stays with the audience in both cases. *Blue Monday* also reverberates beyond Gershwin's own works. The much-vaunted originality apparent in the structures of the Broadway musicals *Show Boat* (1927) and *Oklahoma!* (1943), which brought the integration of dance, drama, and music to new heights, owes something to Gershwin's youthful experiment. But seeing a work solely in terms of its influence on later (and supposedly superior) works is its own form of condescension, one to which music critics and commentators, with their focus on hierarchies of artistic quality, are especially prone. Very few people attend a live performance to see how a piece engendered better pieces. What matters is whether or not the piece itself speaks to us, and *Blue Monday* does.

One of the goals of verismo operas such as *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, and even Puccini's *La Bohème* (which has also crossed borders between opera and Broadway in various ways) was a viable blend of orchestral presence, recitative (speech-based singing of dialogue), and hummable song. *Blue Monday* accomplishes this admirably. In fact, in its seamless melodic sweep from beginning to end, *Blue Monday* is equal and even superior to several operas that have stayed on the boards. But not even these accolades explain the true appeal of *Blue Monday*, which is its humanity – that unique gift Gershwin had for enunciating universal experiences. The ennui of Sam's "aria" "Blue Monday Blues" and the murky allure of Vi's "Has anyone seen my Joe?" frame ideas common to all. Furthermore, it was Gershwin's was uniquely able to express these feelings as if from

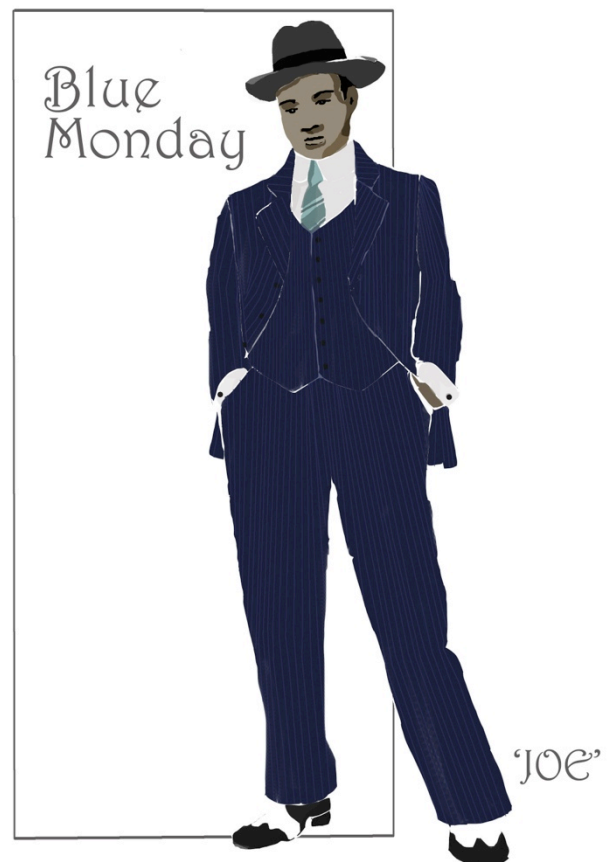
# PROGRAM NOTE

the inside of a character, beyond voyeurism or any form of emotional imperialism. Thus his later song “Someone to Watch Over Me” (1926) becomes a convincing portrayal of an individual offering devotion in exchange for protection, rather than a male fantasy of a weak woman whining for a strong He-Man. In *Blue Monday*, a work about black people written by a Jewish man performed in blackface for a white audience, finding the humanity common to all people is not an insignificant accomplishment.



*William Berger is an author, lecturer, radio commentator and Creative Content Producer for the Metropolitan Opera.*

[Back to menu](#)



Costume Designer Candida K. Nichols' costume renderings for Vi and Joe.

# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



**SARITA ALLEN (DANCER)** During her twenty-year association with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, founder Ailey choreographed eight works featuring Allen; and she has performed *Revelations* for two United States Presidents at the White House. Allen has worked with many renowned choreographers including Elisa Monte (*Treading, Pigs and Fishes*), Judith Jamison (*Hymn*) and George Faison (*Suite Otis, Gazelle*). Her television, and motion picture credits include *Ailey Celebrates Ellington* (CBS), *Bill Cosby Salutes Alvin Ailey* (NBC) *Torture* (The Jackson's), Frances Ford Coppola's *The Cotton Club*, *The Last Dragon*, and *Angel Heart*. Recently she made her choreographic debut with the national and China tours of Elton John's *Aida*. Allen is presently artist-in-residence with Complexions Contemporary Ballet and has been the partner of company co-director Desmond Richardson (2011 Capezio Award Winner) for over fifteen years.



**ELIJAH ISHMAEL AVRAHAM (DANCER)** began his professional career under the direction of Robert Townsend with the Black Family Channel. Avraham later went on to study at Interlochen Center for the Arts, University of the Arts and Alonzo King's Lines Ballet all with full scholarships. Avraham was the NAACP's Act-So Atlanta Branch Dance Gold Medalist in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Avraham's professional theatre credits include: Faison Firehouse Theater, The National Black Arts Festivals, and Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company. Recently, Avraham premiered his dance company Project Maharva at the Kimmel Center, and has choreographed work for dancers from Georgia Ballet, Harlem School of the Arts and Philadanco. Avraham is wholeheartedly thankful to God for his many gifts and aspires to touch lives and cultivate humanity through his blessings.



**NICCO ANNAN (DANCER)** is no stranger to Regional, Broadway, or Off-Broadway stages. This Detroit native is an actor and award winning choreographer whose body of work spans from the theatrical world to the concert stage: *Tis Pity She's A Whore*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, several productions of *Dreamgirls*, Lynn Nottage's *Fabulation* and *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, Brecht's *Man is Man* and countless other productions. He holds true to his statement, "The honor is to be able to work with artists with integrity, that continue tell the truth to change a life"; and for that he is eternally thankful.



# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



**AZAMA BASHIR (DANCER)** started in competitive dance with Vlad's Dance Company while studying the performing arts at the Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts in Toronto Canada. Upon graduation, she continued work in the commercial arena, joining NAM models, and walking in Toronto Fashion week, as well as appearing in film and television, dancing in *Save the Last Dance 2*. She studied at the Ailey School in the Fellowship Program and is currently in the Dance Theater of Harlem Ensemble. She joined Creative Outlet and performed as "Mary" in Seattle Theater Group's *Black Nativity*, under the artistic direction of Jamel Gaines. Azama has performed with the Francesca Harper Project, Buglisi Dance Theater, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. She has worked with choreographers Sidra Bell, Darrell Grant Moultrie, and Karine Plantadit, and is excited to be working with George Faison for the first time on *Blue Monday*.



**ALYSON CAMBRIDGE, SOPRANO (VI)** American soprano Alyson Cambridge has been hailed by critics as "radiant, vocally assured, dramatically and compelling, and artistically imaginative" (*Washington Post*) and noted for her "powerful, clear voice." (*New York Times*) Her rich, warm soprano, combined with her strikingly beautiful stage presence and affecting musical and dramatic interpretation, have brought her over a decade of success on the leading opera and concert stages throughout the United States with The Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, San Francisco Symphony and National Symphony among them, as well as recent debuts in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Beijing. Her repertoire includes the roles of Mimi, Musetta, Violetta, Liu, Donna Elvira, Micaela, among others, as well as recent successful forays in the crossover, Broadway and jazz repertoire.

Upcoming and recent engagements include a highly-acclaimed return to Washington National Opera as Julie in *Show Boat*, featured soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir for an internationally broadcast concert special, debuts with Royal Albert Hall in London, San Diego Opera, Florentine Opera, as Mimi in *La bohème*, and returns to PORTopera and Washington National Opera as Musetta. She also performs concerts and recitals in New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., headlines a multi-city concert tour of China, and performs on several charity galas. She also begins work on her second CD, a compilation of jazz and crossover favorites from The Great American Songbook. Her first CD "From the Diary of Sally

# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Hemings”, a song cycle by William Bolcom, received critical acclaim and she debuted it in New York at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. A graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development program, Alyson Cambridge was the Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and has also been awarded First Prize in the Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation International Voice Competition, is a George London Foundation Award recipient, and winner of the Régine Crespin Award at the Elardo International Opera Competition.

[www.alysoncambridge.com](http://www.alysoncambridge.com)



**LAWRENCE CRAIG**, BARITONE (TOM) Internationally acclaimed baritone Lawrence Craig, is known for his “virtuosic talent” in opera, concert and recital. Most notably, he has appeared as Escamillo in *Carmen*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Ford in *Falstaff* and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. Recent appearances include Henry Davis in *Street Scene* with L'Opéra de Toulon, Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess* with the Virginia Opera and the Buck Hill-Skytop Music Festival, the American premiere of Kurt Weill's *Die Bürgschaft* with the Spoleto Festival USA (recorded for EMI Classics), Handel's “Messiah” with the Rochester Philharmonic, Mozart's “Missa solemnis” at Lincoln Center, Ray's Gospel “Mass” at Carnegie Hall, opera and jazz concerts for the Mozambique International Music Festival, Music Sharing from New York in Japan and he marked his Broadway debut in Baz Luhrmann's *La Bohème On Broadway*. Performing in the NYC concert to honor President Barack Obama's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize was a season highlight. A veteran of jazz, classical, Broadway and modern music performances, his most unusual role was as both stage director and the character Sportin' Life in the Albanian National Opera's recent triumphant production of *Porgy and Bess*.

[www.lawrencecraig.com](http://www.lawrencecraig.com)



**ALVIN CRAWFORD**, BASS (SAM) Alvin Crawford has performed Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* (Volksoper Wien), Der Lautschprecher in *Der Kaiser Von Atlantis* (La Philharmonic, Spoleto Festival Italy and New World Symphony), Pistola in *Falstaff* and Sourin in *The Queen of Spades* (Canadian Opera Company), Il Grande Inquisitor in *Don Carlos*, and Alvise in *La Gioconda* (Staatstheater Kassel), The Ghost in *Hamlet* and Dr. Grenville in *La Traviata* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis.) Recent Broadway engagements include Mufasa in *The Lion King*, Lion in *Candide*, John in *Miss Saigon* and Sam Cooke in *The Buddy*

# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

*Holly Story*. Mr. Crawford's television and film credits include *It Runs in the Family* (MGM), *Clarence* (CBC), PBS Great Performances of *South Pacific* at Carnegie Hall, and *Pray for me Paul Henderson* (CBC.) Mr. Crawford is a Graduate of The Juilliard School.



**ERIC EINHORN (STAGE DIRECTOR)** Award-winning stage director Eric Einhorn has been praised by *The Austin Chronicle* as “a rising star in the opera world” and by *Opera News* for his “keen eye for detail and character insight.” Mr. Einhorn has directed productions for Chicago Lyric Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Ft. Worth Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Florentine Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Utah Opera, and Gotham Chamber Opera. He has been a member of the stage directing staff at the Metropolitan Opera since 2005. He is the founder On Site Opera, and in 2011 conceived and directed Shostakovich's *The Tale of the Silly Baby Mouse* at the Bronx Zoo. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* named Mr. Einhorn's production of *Dialogues des Carmélites* for Pittsburgh Opera one of the top ten classical music performances of 2011. He originally created the production for Austin Lyric Opera in 2009 and was awarded “Best Opera” at the Austin Critics' Table Awards in addition to garnering him a nomination for “Best Director.” Upcoming productions include a new multi-media staging of *Tosca* with the Pacific Symphony and a new production with the Florentine Opera in Milwaukee.

[www.ericeinhorn.com](http://www.ericeinhorn.com)



**GEORGE FAISON (CHOREOGRAPHER)** As producer, writer, essayist, composer, director, choreographer, dancer and actor, George's multifaceted career is replete with awards and acclaim, and a long list of A-listers in the arts with whom he has worked. He was a former principal dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He went on to form his own dance company, The Universal Dance Experience, choreographing such as: *Slaves*, *Tilt* and *Suite Otis*. In 1972, Faison made his choreographic debut on Broadway with the musical *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*. In 1975, he became the first African American to win a Tony award for choreography (for *The Wiz*). He has choreographed and staged concerts for leading artists (Earth, Wind and Fire; Roberta Flack; Aretha Franklin; Gladys Knight and the Pips; Stevie Wonder; Dionne Warwick and Ashford and Simpson). He has also directed productions in major theater venues throughout the United States, and created several theatrical productions of his own. In 2000, George and



# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

co-founder Tad Schnugg opened the Faison Firehouse Theater in Harlem hailed by the media as “Hollywood in Harlem, bringing culture and art to the community.” Since its opening Dr. Faison has launched the Firehouse Respect Project, a mentoring program which continues to reach the underserved youth in the tri state area and especially those in Harlem while also presenting professional performing arts projects at his state of the art theater. [www.faisonfirehouse.org](http://www.faisonfirehouse.org)



**GREGORY HOPKINS (CONDUCTOR)** Gregory Hopkins, celebrated tenor and Artistic Director of Harlem Opera Theater, is a native of Philadelphia and holds degrees from Temple University and the Curtis Institute of Music. He is the winner of top prizes in the Busseto Verdi competition and the Mantova International Vocal Competition, both in Italy. As a singer, pianist, organist, Choral conductor, teacher and clinician, Dr. Hopkins has traveled throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia and The Middle East with recent performances including The Cervantes Festival (Mexico), Orvieto Festival (Italy) and Umbria Festival (Italy). As an educator, he has served on the faculties of Community College of Philadelphia, Morgan State University, Westminster Choir College and NY Seminary of the East. Currently, he is Assistant Professor of Voice at Howard University. For nearly a quarter of a century Dr. Hopkins has been Minister of Music for Harlem's Convent Avenue Baptist Church. He is also Music Director for the Harlem Jubilee Singers and Cocolo Japanese Gospel Choir. Dr. Hopkins' recording credits include Gershwin's *Blue Monday*, Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars* and a recording of spirituals entitled “*Amazing Grace*,” which he also conducted.



**CLAYTON MATHEWS, BASS-BARITONE (MIKE)** “*Clayton Mathews as Don Alfonso was great. His low, rich tone left nothing to be desired and I was very happy every time he sang.*” *Stage Magazine* “*Bass-baritone Mathews' diction and bright, forward tone ensured that pitch and text were never lost in the texture, delivering with a charming smile.*” *South Florida Classical Review*

Bass-Baritone Clayton Mathews, a native of St. Louis, has been praised for his rich colorful tone and animated interpretations. He has performed professionally in opera companies such as Miami Lyric Opera, Riuniti Opera, Sunday Opera and the Opera Project of Lambertville, NJ. Mr. Mathews' most distinguished roles include Amonasro (*Aida*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*),

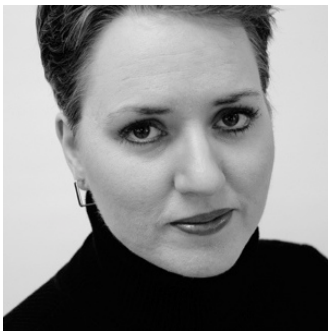


# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



and Giorgio (*I Puritani*). He has also performed the musical theatre roles of Javert (*Les Miserables*) and Agwe (*Once on this Island*). He holds a B.M. in Vocal Performance from Barry University.

**MAHALIA LEOLA MAYS (DANCER)** began her formal dance training at the Fine Arts Center, and went on to study at the Carolina Ballet Theatre and graduated from the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities under the direction of Stanislav Issaev and Irina Ushakova. She has studied at The Ailey School, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Ms. Mays was a recipient of The Links, Incorporated Scholarship for her contribution of dance to her community. She has performed works by a variety of choreographers including George Balanchine, William Gill Michael Leon Thomas, Lloyd Whitmore, Sandra Neels, and Brian McGinnis.



**CANDIDA K. NICHOLS (COSTUME DESIGNER)** is a costume designer and photographer based in New York City. Costume design credits include work for the Lincoln Center Theater/Institute, The New Jersey Shakespeare Festival, the National Asian American Theatre Company, Gotham Chamber Opera, the Perseverance Theater, the Nerve Tank, Williams College and Dance Cores among others. Her design work has also been seen in many independent short films. In 2002 she was the associate designer for *Light of the World*, a cultural event held during the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. Candida is a resident artist with Theater Mitu, which produces work in the United States and the United Arab Emirates. Theater Mitu's work focuses on research and training of world performance traditions. Candida is the recipient of the Richard L. Hay Design Fellowship at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Roy Crane Award for Outstanding Creative Achievement in the Performing Arts. [www.candidaknichols.com](http://www.candidaknichols.com)



**CHASE TAYLOR, TENOR (JOE)** American tenor Chase Taylor is known for his stage presence, artistic sensitivity, and stentorian high notes. He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of North Carolina School for the Arts, with postgraduate studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and Mannes College. Recent appearances include the Messenger (cover) in *Aida*, the Leader (cover) in Weill's *Lost in the Stars*, and various concerts with the Glimmerglass Festival in the summer of 2012; Oliver Hix in *The Music Man* at the

# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Royal Opera House Muscat with the Glimmerglass Festival; performing at the 27th Annual International Prayer Breakfast for the Christian Embassy at the UN; *Show Boat* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Jaffa Music Center/IVAI under Maestro Paul Nadler in Tel Aviv, Israel; and Master classes with Marcello Giordani, Dolora Zajick, Warren Jones, and Virginia Zeani. Upcoming appearances include Joe in *Blue Monday* with On Site Opera/Harlem Opera Theater, and Gladiator in *Eliogabalo* with Gotham Chamber Opera. He was a Regional Finalist in the 2012 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions New England District. [www.chasemtaylor.com](http://www.chasemtaylor.com)



**RAPHAEL THOMAS (DANCER)** Raphael Thomas, age 23, has been dancing since the age of five, and now dances professionally in a range of styles including classical, contemporary, and hip hop. With a dynamic, yet humble personality, he aspires for perfection in all he does. He has taught in the Tri-State area and even overseas in Japan, where he choreographed a piece performed by the Austrian Ballet in Tokyo and during their Australian tour in March of 2010. Now a member and Assistant Choreographer of Rhapsody James' R.E.D. (Rhapsody En Dance) company, he recently performed in Ms. James' production of *Human Metabolism* at Dixon Place. He has recently performed on *Good Morning America* and *Letterman Live* podcast with Alicia Keys. Mr. Thomas has also performed with Kelly Rowland (Courvoisiology Lab), Little Mix, and in various Flash Mobs throughout New York City.

[Back to menu](#)



In their inaugural season last year, On Site Opera (the brainchild of celebrated director Eric Einhorn) presented Shostakovich's *The Tale of the Silly Baby Mouse* amongst the animals of the Bronx Zoo, and received rave reviews from *The New York Times*, who exclaimed, "Now and then you witness a debut so happy and so rich with potential that you can't wait to share the news." On Site Opera is a new opera company built around the idea that exciting performances can happen outside the walls of a traditional theater. Through immersive, site-specific productions, performers and audiences will experience great music and drama as never before in some of New York's most exciting spaces.

In addition to site-specific productions, On Site Opera's mission is to forge community partnerships in order to bring opera to new and underserved audiences, as well as to foster the development of emerging talent through performance and production opportunities.

Eric Einhorn, *Founder/Artistic Director*  
Jessica Kiger, *Creative Producer*  
Audrey Chait, *Production Manager*  
Amanda Sweet - Bucklesweet Media, *Publicist*

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Nicholas Bentivoglio  
Eric Einhorn  
Shelley Einhorn  
Marie Golda  
Jane Gross  
Miriam Sondag

#### **DONORS**

*We would like to thank our donors for their support of On Site Opera:*

Lynn Cohen  
Steven & Shelley Einhorn  
Marie Golda  
Jane Gross  
Barbara Heller  
Mickey & Jeannie Kiger  
Thomas Luddy  
Jamie Checkett McLaughlin  
Andrew Parlin  
Deborah Paul  
John Spallanzani  
Jason Trennert  
Denis Wong



[OnSiteOpera](#)



[OnSiteOpera](#)



[OnSiteOpera](#)

[www.osopera.org](http://www.osopera.org) | [Join our mailing list](#) | [Donate to On Site Opera](#)

[Back to menu](#)

# ABOUT HARLEM OPERA THEATER



Under Artistic Director Gregory Hopkins, internationally acclaimed tenor, conductor, organist and pianist, the Harlem Opera Theater's performances include all types of musical offerings: opera, oratory concerts, recitals, Negro Spirituals and varied forms of American music. Harlem Opera Theater's mission is to provide performance opportunities for gifted professional and developing singers, as well as other musicians of exceptional potential for an operatic career in the local, national and international forums; offer operatic performance, education and develop audiences for the art form in underserved communities; present a competitive venue for the encouragement and promotion of exceptional talent within that same community; and to give a particular, though not exclusive emphasis on music about the African-American experience.

Founded in 2001, Harlem Opera Theater has presented over 90 artists to an audience of 11,000 patrons. The repertoire includes the "Opera for Beginners" literacy project for young scholars in New York City public schools and after school programs, collaborations with other organizations and an international tour of the Harlem Opera Theater Vocal Competition winners to several countries in South America.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Edwina Meyers-Lynch, *President*

Carol Brown, *Secretary*

Gregory Hopkins, *Artistic Director*

Barbara Burroughs

LaSaundra Estelle, DDS

Minister Ruqaiyah Nabe

Arturo Carvajal, *International Coordinator*

## **FOUNDING MEMBERS**

Barbara Conrad • Patricia Sage

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Paris Brown • Bernard Butler • Marsha Greene

Lloyd Harrison • Lisa Jones

## **SPONSORS**

FRIENDS OF HARLEM OPERA THEATER  
NEW YORK STATE COUNSEL FOR THE ARTS



**West Harlem Development Corporation**

Fund of Tides Foundation

[www.harlemoperatheater.org](http://www.harlemoperatheater.org)

[Back to menu](#)



# ABOUT THE HARLEM CHAMBER PLAYERS



The Harlem Chamber Players is a multi-ethnic collective of professional musicians dedicated to bringing affordable and accessible live classical music to people in the Harlem community and beyond. The Harlem Chamber Players not only bring live chamber music to underserved neighborhoods in the Harlem community, but also create opportunities for classically trained minority musicians.

The Harlem Chamber Players was founded in 2008 by clarinetist Liz Player and violist Charles Dalton, who met while performing at a Black History Month gala concert at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and was encouraged by Janet Wolfe, founder of the New York City Housing Symphony Orchestra and long-time patron of minority classical musicians. The Harlem Chamber Players have since been bringing live chamber music to Harlem and beyond through its acclaimed “Music at St. Mary’s” series at the historic St. Mary’s Church of Manhattanville and various free outdoor and other community outreach concerts.

[www.harlemchamberplayers.org](http://www.harlemchamberplayers.org)

[www.facebook.com/TheHarlemChamberPlayers](https://www.facebook.com/TheHarlemChamberPlayers)

[Back to menu](#)

## SPECIAL THANKS



John Beatty, *Owner & CEO*  
[cottonclub-newyork.com](http://cottonclub-newyork.com)



George Faison & Tad Schnugg, *Co-Founders*  
[faisonfirehouse.org](http://faisonfirehouse.org)

Convent Avenue Baptist Church  
Stacey K. Anderson  
William Berger  
Gregory Elfers  
Affan Malik  
Jeff Tarascio

---

Cover photo of Alyson Cambridge by Richard Termine

On Site Opera & Harlem Opera Theater are proud participants of



[Back to menu](#)