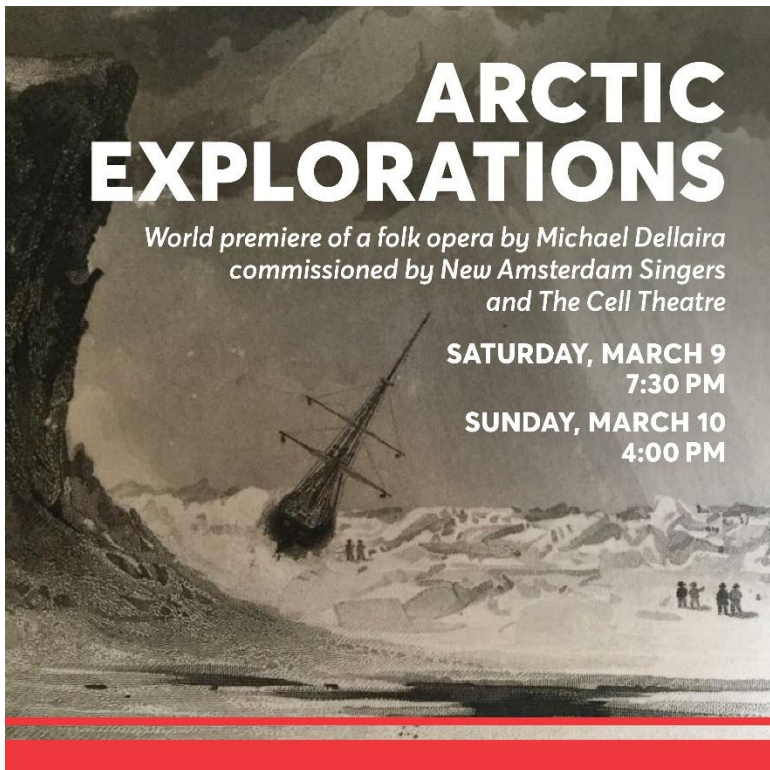


# NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

CLARA LONGSTRETH, Music Director

**2023-2024 Season**



Theatre at St. Jean  
150 East 76<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York City

# NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

Clara Longstreth, *Music Director*

T.J. Barnes, *Assistant Conductor*

Nathaniel Granor, *Chamber Chorus Assistant Conductor*

Pen Ying Fang, *Piano*

## ***Arctic Explorations***

### ***OPENING ACT***

Thule, The Period of Cosmography

Thomas Weelkes  
(1576-1623)

Storyteller

B.E. Boykin  
(b. 1989)

Pen Ying Fang, *Piano*

Northwest Passage

Stan Rogers  
(1949-1983)  
Arr. Ron Smail  
(b. 1953)

Rebecca Dee, *Mezzo-Soprano*  
Benjamin Prud'homme, *Tenor*  
Robin Beckhard, *Soprano*

Chamber Chorus

### ***BRIEF PAUSE***

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*Please turn off all phones and other devices during the performance. The use of cameras (including smartphones) and recording devices during the performance is prohibited.*

# Arctic Explorations

Michael Dellaira

Additional music for Siarnaq by Nuka Alice

*Prelude: Sullualuk (The Northwest Passage)*  
*Scene 1: Maggie Fox and the Spirit-Circle*  
*Scene 2: Lady Jane*  
*Scene 3: The Expedition*  
*Scene 4: Love Letters – Interlude 1*  
*Scene 5: In the Ice*  
*Scene 6: Love Letters – Interlude 2*  
*Scene 7: Siarnaq*  
*Scene 8: Natural Laws*  
*Scene 9: Christmas*  
*Scene 10: Sir John – Died in Her Majesty's Service*  
*Scene 11: The Escape*  
*Scene 12: New York*  
*Scene 13: Spirit World*  
*Postlude: Sullualuk*

## Cast (in order of appearance):

Siarnaq	Nuka Alice
Margaret (Maggie) Fox	Nicole Haslett
President Zachary Taylor	Michael Celentano
Lady Jane Franklin	Erin Brittain
Elisha Kent Kane	Colin Levin

**Chorus soloists (in order of appearance):** Ellen Stark, Nate Mickelson, Jennifer Trahan, Bryan Murray, Benjamin Prud'homme, A. Robert Pietrzak, Elisa Peimer, Paul Parsekian, Michelle Neary

## World Premiere

*Commissioned by New Amsterdam Singers  
and Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre*

The Harlem Chamber Players  
Full Chorus

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*Arctic Explorations is a fiscally sponsored project of the New York Foundation for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. The opera was also supported by the NAS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund and generous private donors. The Greenlandic Arts Foundation and NAPA - Nordic Institute of Greenland enabled Nuka Alice's participation.*

## **Arctic Explorations**

Several years ago, New Amsterdam Singers began conversations with composer Michael Dellaira, whose works we have often performed, about collaborating on a new one-act folk opera he proposed. The subject matter—*Arctic Explorations*—was intriguing, and his enthusiasm for it was contagious. We agreed to co-commission the piece with Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre. Dellaira's own notes on the work are below.

But first, I would like to introduce our pre-opera "curtain raiser," performed by our Chamber Chorus—a group of choral pieces that relate to the theme of exploring the unknown, either through their text or through the background of the composer.

We begin with the 16<sup>th</sup> century madrigal, *Thule, The Period of Cosmography*, by **Thomas Weelkes**. The madrigal is unusual in two ways. Rather than calling for 4 or 5 voices, he calls for 6, including two tenors! And instead of the most typical theme for a madrigal—love—he lists locations throughout the world.

Thule itself is the most northerly location mentioned in ancient Greek and Roman literature and cartography. In classical and medieval literature, "Ultima Thule" came to mean "any distant place located beyond the 'borders of the known world.'" By the late Middle Ages, "Ultima Thule" was sometimes used as a Latin name for Greenland.

Other places mentioned include Hecla (an active volcano in Iceland), Trinacria (now known as Sicily), Mount Etna (an active volcano there), Andalusia (a region in southern Spain), and Fogo (an island on Cape Verde that is a volcanic hotspot). Though much of the piece focuses on these mysterious and volatile locations, Weelkes finds his way to love, writing: "These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I, whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry."

*Thule, the period of cosmography,  
Doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulphureous fire  
Doth melt the frozen clime and thaw the sky;  
Trinacrian Etna's flames ascend not higher:  
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,  
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.*

*The Andalusian merchant that returns  
Laden with cochineal and china dishes,  
Reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns  
Amidst an ocean full of flying fishes:  
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,  
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.*

Next comes *Storyteller* by **B.E. Boykin**. Boykin studied classical piano at Spelman College, where she began composing and arranging music for the Spelman Glee Club. She later completed her M.M. in Sacred Music at Westminster Choir College and her Ph.D. in Music Education at Georgia State University. She writes choral, instrumental, and operatic music, with commissions by Minnesota Opera and the Kennedy Center.

*Storyteller* was commissioned for the 2019 Uncommon Music Festival in Sitka, Alaska. The piece sets a text of the same name by Ishmael Angaluuk Hope, a Tlingit and Inupiaq poet, storyteller, scholar, video game writer and novelist, who lives in Dzantik'ihéeni (Juneau, Alaska). In an interview for the website Best American Poetry, Hope muses that "Poetry, in the broadest sense possible, which to me is something like deep and intense thought, and thought which extends beyond the human world, can remind us of the invisible yet tangible tapestry that connects us." True to that form, in *Storyteller*, reverent depictions of nature provide exciting, colorful moments within a wistful stream-of-consciousness tapestry of relationships and daily moments. "Nature makes the most enduring poetry," Hope explains, "because it's ever-renewing and luminous if left to its own devices."

So many songs came to me as I was falling asleep  
And so many times I let them go  
The urge to rest stronger than the urge to speak  
But when you wake in the morning before the dreams fade  
Save a place for me

So many heartbreaks passed me by  
Many times I didn't live them  
Their ghosts are everywhere  
I opened my hands for the rain that came by  
That's sure to come again

But when you travel to faraway places  
Hiking to the mountaintops  
Your legs barely holding you up  
And dark blue birds lift you in their beaks  
Save a place for me

So many false rests passed me by  
I arrived at the ocean and I couldn't smell the saltwater  
But when you invite guests into your home  
And the garlic and the herbs melt the room  
Your eyes are lost gazing into the music  
Save a place for me

So many good people came by  
I kept a part of them in my palms  
Old men and women are standing up,  
Holding the islands between the worlds  
They are standing up spreading medicine leaves to the wind  
And when you take off your skin and lay your belly in the sand  
Save a place for me

— Ishmael Hope

The Chamber Chorus ends with *Northwest Passage*, perhaps the best-known song by Canadian folk musician and songwriter **Stan Rogers**. Rogers' music, influenced by the traditional Celtic style common in parts of Eastern Canada, often focuses on maritime themes—evoking sea shanties—and themes of honor,

history, and hope. His fame has grown considerably since his death on Air Canada Flight 797 in Hebron, Kentucky in 1983.

In *Northwest Passage*, Rogers depicts the wilderness of North America as an awe-inspiring yet dangerous place, speaking with great reverence of the European and Canadian explorers who faced it, sometimes losing their lives in the process. The singer reflects on how his own life choices mirror those of early European and Canadian explorers who forever "gave up a settled life" to push westward for their own motives.

REFRAIN:

*Ah, for just one time, I would take the Northwest Passage,  
To find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea.  
Tracing one warm line thru' a land so wild and savage,  
And make a Northwest Passage to the sea.*

VERSES:

*Westward from the Davis Strait 'tis there 'twas said to lie;  
The sea route to the Orient for which so many died.  
Seeking gold and glory, leaving weathered broken bones  
And a long forgotten lonely cairn of stones.*

*Three centuries thereafter, I take passage overland  
In the footsteps of brave Kelso, where his sea of flowers began.  
Watching cities rise before me, then behind me sink again  
This tardiest explorer driving hard across the plain.*

*How then am I so diff'rent from the first men thru' this way?  
Like them I left a settled life (I threw it all away)  
To seek a Northwest Passage at the call of many men  
To find there but the road back home again.*

After a brief pause, we come to **Michael Dellaira's** opera, *Arctic Explorations*, which dives even deeper into the quest for a Northwest Passage. Dellaira writes:

*The background: In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the United States and Western European nations were obsessed with finding a shipping route through the Arctic that would connect the*

Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Such a route, if navigable, would shorten the trip between London and China from six months to just six weeks. With that in mind, the British explorer Sir John Franklin set sail in search of this Northwest Passage, and after five years, when he hadn't returned, the British Navy declared him dead. His widow, the bereft but insistent Lady Jane Franklin, turned to American president Zachary Taylor for assistance: wasn't the great United States as capable of laying claim to the Northwest Passage as England? And if so, couldn't it rescue her husband at the same time? Moved and savvy, President Taylor asked Congress to commission U.S. Navy surgeon Elisha Kent Kane, a well-connected Philadelphian, to lead an expedition to the Arctic.

In pursuit of Franklin and the Northwest Passage, Kane and his crew were trapped in the ice off the coast of Greenland for two years. But they survived, not because they brought with them the technology of the modern world (though they did do that), but because they turned to and learned from the Inuit. This set him apart from other Arctic explorers—Franklin included—who, always at their peril, considered themselves superior to the Inuit. When Kane returned to America, he began writing a detailed account of his expedition, which was so popular that by 1900 it was said that every household owned at least two books: Kane's *Arctic Explorations* and the Bible.

Americans in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century were also obsessed with a quasi-religion called Spiritualism, which was the belief that the living could communicate with the dead through special people called mediums. Among the most famous of these were Kate and Maggie Fox, two sisters from upstate New York. That Elisha Kent Kane and Maggie Fox were romantically involved was the stuff of scandal, and though opposites in almost every respect (from background to belief), both were sought-after speakers. Kane told tales of far-away places, of glaciers and of polar bears, to wide-eyed crowds, and Maggie Fox diverted an eager



*public with the messages communicated through her from another untraveled place, the hereafter.*

*My opera, Arctic Explorations, registers the human desire to discover what lies beyond the boundaries of our experience. Explorers, all of us, our success often comes at a cost, and nowhere can this cost be witnessed more than in the Arctic, one of the most beautiful – and endangered – places on earth. Today, because of global warming, the Inuit, who have lived in the Arctic for centuries, are watching their land disappear. Over 300 billion tons of ice melted from the Humboldt Glacier on a single day last June.*

*I based my libretto on Kane's book, as well as on letters and newspaper articles from the period, including the love letters between Kane and Fox and the correspondence between Lady Jane Franklin and President Taylor. But since the Inuit and their homeland are also essential to his opera, the libretto contains a number of passages in the Inuit language Kalaallisut (now called Greenlandic since Greenland's independence from Denmark). To aid in pronunciation and translation, I collaborated with Greenlandic (and Inuk) drum-dancer Nuka Alice, who, in addition, vetted the libretto, making sure that the 19<sup>th</sup> century Inuit characters are as true to life as possible.*

*To be sure, I hope to illuminate audiences about the Arctic and about global warming, but I want as well to tell a story about the human desire to explore the unknown. That desire gave birth to science, after all. And it gives rise, too, to superstition, deception, ignorance, and exploitation.*

Supertitles, along with some of Kane's own sketches, will be projected during the performance. The full libretto is available to download at Dellaira's website, <https://michaeldellaira.com/>.

Program Notes © 2024 Clara Longstreth,  
Raymond Wells, Nathaniel Granor, and Michael Dellaira

# ***New Amsterdam Singers Chorus***

## ***Soprano***

Orren Alperstein  
Robin Beckhard\*  
Martha Beckwith  
Colleen Blain  
Laura Cohen\*\*  
Dana Crowell\*\*  
Susan Daum  
Naomi Draper  
Lillie Dremeaux  
Rebecca Harris  
Abigail Kniffin  
Teryn Kuzma  
Jaime Leifer\*\*  
Michelle Neary\*  
Tracey Ober  
Andrea Olejar\*\*  
Judith Pott\*  
Clara Schuhmacher\*\*  
Elizabeth Stein  
Elspeth Strang  
Jennifer Trahan

## ***Alto***

Gabi Barton  
Cindy Brome  
Isabel Colman  
Rebecca Dee\*  
Jenny Delson  
Nora Isacoff  
Hannah Kerwin  
Naya Mukherji  
Elisa Peimer  
Charlotte Rocker\*\*

Ellen Stark\*  
Vera Sziklai  
Briel Waxman  
Donna Zalichin  
Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff

## ***Tenor***

Paul Blanchard\*\*  
Nathaniel Granor\*\*  
Thomas Haller  
Robert Marlowe  
Nate Mickelson  
Paul Parsekian\*  
A. Robert Pietrzak  
John Pinegar  
Adam Poole  
Benjamin Prud'homme\*  
Tim Sachs\*\*  
Hsin Wang

## ***Bass***

Bendix Anderson\*  
T.J. Barnes  
Philip Holmgren\*\*  
Steve Holtje\*  
John Leuenhagen  
Jeff McNerney  
Brian Murray  
Robert Palmer  
Raymond Wells\*  
Rafael Yuste

\*Chamber Chorus

\*\*Chamber Chorus Only

# **Arctic Explorations**

## **Stage Production Team**

Stage Director	Kira Simring
Production Manager	Julian Singer-Corbin
Stage Manager	Richard Urquiza
Company Managers	Paul Parsekian, Tim Sachs, & Clara Schuhmacher
Lighting Designer	Chris Voegels
Projection Designer	Qixin Zhang
Costume Designer	Danielle Hartley

## **Understudies**

Margaret (Maggie) Fox	Teryn Kuzma
Lady Jane Franklin	Robin Beckhard
Elisha Kent Kane	Bryan Murray

## **Harlem Chamber Players**

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet	Liz Player
Guitar	Justin Rothberg
Banjo	Zac Larson
Violin	Ashley Horne
Viola	Aundrey Mitchell
Double Bass	Anthony Morris
Percussion	Scott Still

## **New Amsterdam Singers Staff**

Clara Longstreth, *Music Director*

T.J. Barnes, *Assistant Conductor*

Pen Ying Fang, *Accompanist*

Stefanie Izzo, *Manager*

### ***Board of Directors***

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Orren Alperstein, *Treasurer*

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Allan Miller

Diana Solomon-Glover

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**NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS** is incorporated as a nonprofit charitable organization under the laws of the State of New York. Contributions are tax-deductible. Dues and ticket sales meet only half of our annual expenses. Donations of any size are gratefully accepted and can be made online ([nasingers.org/donate](http://nasingers.org/donate)) or mailed to New Amsterdam Singers, Inc., P.O. Box 373, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025. A copy of our latest annual report is available upon written request.

New Amsterdam Singers

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## **About the Artists**

**New Amsterdam Singers**, now in its 56<sup>th</sup> year, is known for the breadth and variety of its repertoire. Specializing in a *cappella* and double-chorus works, the chorus sings music ranging from the 16th century through contemporary pieces, including many it has commissioned. In addition to works by Carol Barnett, Lisa Bielawa, and Ben Moore commissioned for the group's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, recent world premieres include compositions by Matthew Harris, Paul Alan Levi, Elizabeth Lim, Robert Paterson, and Ronald Perera. Our most recent previous commission, *The World of Dreams* by Dale Trumbore, was presented in March 2023. American and New York City premieres in the previous decade included works by Robert Paterson, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Matthew Harris, Abbie Betinis, Steven Stucky, Kirke Mechem, Steven Sametz, Kitty Brazelton, Clare Maclean, Alex Weiser, Sheena Phillips, and Judith Shatin. In 2016 NAS performed Frank Martin's oratorio *Golgotha* with professional orchestra and soloists as guests of Trinity Church Wall Street, under the direction of Clara Longstreth, the first time the work was heard in New York City in over 60 years.

NAS has performed with the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein, at Alice Tully Hall as a guest of Clarion Concerts, and with the American-Russian Youth Orchestra under Leon Botstein at Tanglewood and Carnegie Hall. NAS has appeared twice with Anonymous 4 in Richard Einhorn's *Voices of Light* - in 1999 at Avery Fisher Hall with Concordia Orchestra under Marin Alsop, and in 2006 at the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center with Ensemble Sospeso under David Hattner, for broadcast on WYNC's *New Sounds*.

NAS has also appeared internationally under Ms. Longstreth's direction at the Heraklion Festival in Greece; the Granada Festival in Spain; the International Choral Festival at Międzyzdroje, Poland; the Festival of the Algarve in Portugal;

Les Chorégies d'Orange in France; and the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales. The chorus has also performed in Turkey, Scandinavia, Croatia, Spain, Argentina and Uruguay, Cuba, South Africa, Greece, Iceland, Denmark, and Bulgaria.

**Clara Longstreth, Conductor**, is the founder and Music Director of New Amsterdam Singers, and has led the group for its past 56 seasons. Under her direction, NAS has become known as one of the premier avocational choruses in New York City. Of Ms. Longstreth's programs, Allan Kozinn wrote in *The New York Times*, "When a director takes up the challenge of building a cohesive program around a broad theme, we are reminded that programming can be an art." And in June, 2018, Times critic Anthony Tommasini wrote, "You think von Karajan's 35-year reign at the Berlin Philharmonic and Eugene Ormandy's 44-year association with the Philadelphia Orchestra were impressive runs? Well, at a concert on Wednesday night [May 30, 2018], Clara Longstreth concluded her 50th season as music director of...New Amsterdam Singers.... Ms. Longstreth conducted with undiminished energy and focus."

Ms. Longstreth has studied conducting with G. Wallace Woodworth (Harvard), Richard Westenbug (Juilliard), Amy Kaiser and Semyon Bychkov (Mannes College of Music), and Helmuth Rilling (Oregon Bach Festival). She has been a frequent adjudicator at choral conferences, and was selected to present a lecture-demonstration on "Adventures in Programming" at the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association. Ms. Longstreth has served on the faculty of Rutgers University, and as a guest conductor of the Limón Dance Company, the Mannes College Orchestra, and the popular Messiah Sing-In performances at Avery Fisher Hall. Ms. Longstreth received her B.A. from Radcliffe College of Harvard University and her M.A. from The Juilliard School. She has led the chorus on 17 international tours.

**T.J. Barnes, NAS Assistant Conductor**, a native of Buffalo, NY, is a NYC-based conductor, educator, performer, pianist, and arranger. He is the Director of Music at Flushing High School, where he revived and developed programs in Chorus, Piano, Guitar, and Music Appreciation. T.J. holds a B.M. in Vocal Performance and a graduate certificate in K-12 Music Education from the Aaron Copland School of Music at CUNY Queens College. Performance credits include Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* at Queens College and Joe Hardy in *Damn Yankees* at the Kupferberg Center of the Arts. He also served as Music Director of the Queens College a cappella group iTones, where he arranged their award-winning set at the 2019 ICCA Northeast Regional Semifinal Championships. T.J. is a recipient of the first Maurice Peress Memorial Award in conducting and the American Choral Directors Association's 2019 Next Direction Collegiate Leadership Award.

**Nathaniel Granor, NAS Chamber Chorus Assistant Conductor**, has been a member of NAS since 2013. He is also the Music Director of The Lost Keys, a NYC-based contemporary a cappella group that is releasing a new album at the end of March. Nathaniel is a graduate of Yale University, where he directed several ensembles including the Yale Spizzwinks(?) and the Davenport Pops Orchestra. By day, he works as a freelance consultant in technology and education.

**Pen Ying Fang, NAS Accompanist**, has performed widely in the New York and Philadelphia metro areas. Currently, she serves as a coach and accompanist at Westminster Choir College, where she has worked with many prominent artists and renowned voice programs such as the CoOPERative summer program and the Florence Voice Seminar in Italy. As an accompanist, Pen Ying has also performed and toured with several choirs from the New York area. In 2018 she was a featured performer in a Philip Glass opera workshop in North Adams, MA. Pen Ying is a native

of Taiwan, where she began studying piano at age five. She holds B.M. and M.M. degrees in Piano from Rutgers University.

**Stefanie Izzo, *NAS Manager***, is a classically trained soprano, educator, and nonprofit administrator. She received an M.A. in vocal performance from the Aaron Copland School of Music at CUNY Queens College and a B.M. from NYU. Stefanie has been hailed as possessing a “gorgeously rich and full sound” for her work in opera and musical theater.

In addition to operatic repertoire, Stefanie devotes a significant amount of her performance time to art song, particularly that of female composers, and maintains an active concert schedule in the NYC area. She is a frequent collaborator with living composers, and is a co-founder of the chamber ensemble The Astoria Music Project. Stefanie is the Manager of Education Partnerships at the Metropolitan Opera.

**Nuka Alice, *Siarnaq***, from Sisimiut, Greenland, is a pioneer in the revitalization of the Inuit sacred drum dancing and singing in Greenland, that originated in the Inuit culture thousands of years ago and was almost forgotten for many years. Through her teaching, she is both a keeper and a creator of songs. She learned drum dancing from Pauline Lumholdt in 2009 and that same year she created the first of her own drum songs. Nuka Alice performs her own songs along with songs she has co-written with others, interwoven with storytelling. Since 2014 she has opened the annual Arctic Sounds music festival, and in 2017, she and the East Greenlandic drum dancer Anda Kuitsi opened the autumn gathering for Greenland’s parliament as the first drum dancers to do so. This tradition has been inscribed in UNESCO’s 2021 Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Nuka Alice teaches Inuit drum dance at Knud Rasmussenip højskolea, the music school Serravik, and as a guest teacher at the national theatre school.



**Nicole Haslett, Margaret (Maggie) Fox**, coloratura soprano, has performed worldwide as Gilda in *Rigoletto* (Hong Kong Opera), Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Arizona Opera), Shepherd in *Dinorah* (Deutsche Oper Berlin), and in Nico Muhly's *Marnie* (Metropolitan Opera), among others. She has performed with Berkshire Opera Festival, Lyric Opera of Kansas, Cincinnati Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chautauqua Opera and Opera Theater of St. Louis. Ms. Haslett was a 2014 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions grand finalist and was a second-place winner of the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition in 2015. She received her B.M. from New York University and her M.M. in Vocal Performance from Manhattan School of Music, where she won the Alan M. and Joan Taub Ades Vocal Competition.

**Michael Celentano, President Taylor**, tenor, is a former young artist at Martina Arroyo's Prelude to Performance, Tri-Cities Opera, and Finger Lakes Opera. As the winner of the 2023 National Federation of Music Clubs Competition, he will tour as a recitalist and masterclass facilitator. Recent appearances include Finger Lakes Opera's *Aida* as Radames (cover) and Stony Brook Opera Theater's *La Tragedie de Carmen* as Don Jose. Other featured performances include Max in Bronx Opera's production of *Der Freischütz*, Miner in *La Fanciulla del West* and Ensemble in *L'Amore de tre Re*, both with New York City Opera, as well as a Nibeckung Vassal in The Metropolitan Opera's 2019 production of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. Mr. Celentano is currently pursuing a D.M.A. at Stony Brook University and is a student of Jeremy Little and Brenda Harris.

**Erin Brittain, Lady Jane Franklin**, soprano, has performed more than 30 roles in opera, operetta, and musical theater. She was artist in residence with the Canton (Ohio) Symphony Orchestra where she performed in Bach's *Jauchzett Gott* and Mozart's *Missa Brevis* in D. She made her Boston debut in a stage version of Schutz's *Christmas Oratorio* and was the featured soprano in

Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* at the Bard Music Festival. She has worked with numerous companies, festivals, and venues, including the American Symphony Orchestra, the New York Virtuoso Singers, the Berkshire Bach Society, Opera Fayetteville, Princeton Festival Opera, Opera Delaware, Dicapo Opera, Liederkrantz Opera, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall. As a member of The Perspective Collective Ensemble (TPC) she helps commission and produce new works from composers including Michael Leibowitz, Sunny Knable and Stephanie Leotsako. Ms. Brittain received her bachelor's degree from New York University and a master's degree from the Peabody Institute.

**Colin Levin, Elisha Kent Kane**, baritone, has a 2023-2024 season that includes a return to Carnegie Hall as the baritone soloist in both Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with the Masterwork Festival Chorus presented by Manhattan Concert Productions and Giovanni Battista Martini's *Domine ad adjuvandum me festina* with the New England Symphonic Ensemble presented by MidAmerica Productions; the new music festival Nordic Music Days with performances in Glasgow and Edinburgh in the orchestral song cycle *New Words/New Instruments/New Duos* by multiple composers including Stuart MacRae (GB-SCT) and Tine Surel Lange (NO); Nordic art music recitals with the Summartónar Festival in the Faroe Islands featuring the premiere of the song cycle *Things That Are Rare* by Griffin Candey (US)/Richie Hofmann, the Við Djúpið Festival in Ísafjörður, Iceland featuring the premiere of Halldór Smárason's song cycle *Fjallkonuljóð* (The Poem of the Woman of the Mountain), the Nordisk Sångfestival in Trollhättan, Sweden, and a return to Victor Borge Hall at Scandinavia House in New York City which includes North American art song premieres by Sunleif Rasmussen (FO). Levin was recently awarded as an American-Scandinavian Foundation Fellow.

**Michael Dellaira, Composer**, has written four previous operas: *Chéri*, developed at The Actors Studio and a 2006 finalist for the

American Academy of Arts and Letters Richard Rodgers Award in Musical Theater; *The Secret Agent*, premiered in 2011 by Center for Contemporary Opera and named the Armel International Opera Festival's Laureat that same year; *The Death of Webern*, premiered at Symphony Space and recorded by Frost Opera Theater, conducted by Alan Johnson and selected one of the "5 Best New Works" of 2016 by Opera News; and *The Leopard*, world premiere at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center in 2022, conducted by Gerard Schwarz and just released on the Naxos label. A recipient of an ASCAP Morton Gould Award, a Jerome Commission from the American Composers Forum, a Fulbright Fellowship, and grants from the Ford and Mellon Foundations, the New Jersey Arts Council, the New York State Council on the Arts, Cary Trust, and the American Music Center, Dellaira studied with Milton Babbitt and Paul Lansky at Princeton, and with Goffredo Petrassi at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. More info at [www.michaeldellaira.com](http://www.michaeldellaira.com).

**The Harlem Chamber Players** is an ethnically diverse collective of professional musicians dedicated to bringing high caliber, affordable live music to people in the Harlem community and beyond. Founded in 2008, the ensemble presents a rich season of live concerts, indoors, outdoors, and online. They also promote arts inclusion and equal access to the arts, bringing live music to underserved communities and promoting shared community arts and cultural engagement. The Harlem Chamber Players was first inspired by the late Janet Wolfe, a long-time patron of minority musicians and founder of the NYC Housing Authority Symphony Orchestra. The Players have presented culturally relevant programs at numerous venues throughout the city and collaborated with many other arts organizations. The Harlem Chamber Players are also Artists-in-residence at the Harlem School of the Arts. The ensemble has been featured on WQXR as well as The Greene Space at WQXR and WNYC. They are the recipients of

the 2022 Sam Miller Award for the Performing Arts. To learn more, go to [www.harlemchamberplayers.org](http://www.harlemchamberplayers.org).

**Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre** is a not-for-profit dedicated to the incubation and presentation of new works across all artistic disciplines that mine the mind, pierce the heart, and awaken the soul. Founded in 2006 as a "21st-century salon," the cell has provided a developmental home for the performing arts, food artists, cyborg theatre artists, musicians, installation artists, choreographers, and more. Past performances include *cryptochrome*, *I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire*, *The Final Veil*, *Elizabeth Swados' Nightclub Cantata*, *Fruma-Sarah (Waiting in the Wings)*, *Persou* by One Whale's Tale, *The Evolution of Mann*, *Bastard Jones* (a Drama-Desk Award nominee), *Crackskull Row*, *Peter/Wendy*, *Horse Girls*, *Hard Times: An American Musical* (now the Tony-Award Winning *Paradise Square*) and *Dinner and Delusion*. Work developed at the cell has been seen on Broadway, Irish Repertory Theatre, MCC, Rattlestick Playwrights' Theatre, and more!

**Kira Simring, Stage Director**, is the Artistic Director of Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre in NYC, where she has developed and directed new works since 2006. Directing credits include the world premieres of *Yes! Reflections of Molly Bloom* (Irish Rep), *Crackskull Row* by Honor Molloy (New York Times Critics' Pick), *The Women Who Rode Away* by Natalia Zukerman (the cell and off the WALL), *What Kind of Woman*, *Hard Times: An American Musical* by Larry Kirwan (New York Times Critics' Pick), and *Dinner and Delusion*. Kira is the recipient of a Shubert Foundation grant and is a three-time Origin Theatre 1st Irish Award Winner for Best Director.

**Julian Singer-Corbin, Production Manager**, is the Technical Director for Nancy Manocherian's the cell theatre. He has served as a founding member and Director of Production for The Why Collective, an interdisciplinary arts group. Recent

clients include Princeton University, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, Rockefeller Center, HERE Arts, American Opera Project, Gotham Hall, World Wildlife Fund, Park Avenue Armory and Emitha Records. His teachings, compositions, and talents have been featured at Santa Fe Opera, Detroit Youth Symphony, ArtPark, EMPAC at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Collective Conservatory, and The University of New Mexico.

**Richard Urquiza, Stage Manager**, has credits from 2023 that include: *Shadows* (Dir. Anthony Laura), *Communion* (Dir. Kira Simring), *Freedom Summer* (Dir. Joan Kane), *PROUD* (Dir. Eric Parness). B.A from Rutgers University. Richard can be found on insta (@richard\_urquiza) or by email (rich.urquiza@gmail).

**Chris Voegels, Lighting Designer**, designs new and exciting works created by his friends. He has designed for the cell theatre, Ars Nova, and the Whitney Museum. [chrisvoegels.com](http://chrisvoegels.com)

**Qixin Zhang, Projection Designer**, is an interdisciplinary multimedia artist and collaborative designer who blends art and technology to create transformative experiences. Her work reflects a harmonious fusion of both east and west creative perspectives and bridges dimensions, utilizing media in innovative ways to captivate audiences and inspire connections. Carnegie Mellon University, M.F.A. [ultrablack.xyz](http://ultrablack.xyz) | @ultrablacki

**Danielle Hartley, Costume Designer**, is a third-generation seamstress currently working as a stitcher for Broadway productions. She is the founder of the Morningside Mending Circle and has costumed The Riverside Church children's productions, as well as other community theater. Through costume creation and design, Danielle aspires to share her love of storytelling. She has supplemented her informal costume design and stitching education with courses at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, NY and mentorship by textile experts.

# Contributors

Our concerts are made possible by the generous support of our donors. This donor list reflects contributions received from July 1, 2023 through February 26, 2024. If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, we apologize; please let us know by email at [manager@nasingers.org](mailto:manager@nasingers.org).

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Visit [www.nasingers.org](http://www.nasingers.org) for the latest chorus news, recordings, and videos. You can also see the many commissions and premieres that New Amsterdam Singers has been proud to present (click on "our Music").

### ***Upcoming Concerts***

*Arctic Explorations* Video Encore Presentation, April 7-21, 2024  
*Threads of Joy*, May 17 & 19, 2024, Broadway Presbyterian Church

### ***Sing With Us!***

Music Director Clara Longstreth invites singers with choral experience and sight-reading ability in all voice parts to audition for New Amsterdam Singers. We rehearse Tuesday evenings at Broadway Presbyterian Church. Email [info@nasingers.org](mailto:info@nasingers.org) to arrange an audition.

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