



For Immediate Release

EXPANSIVE

A SHOWCASE OF TRANSGENDER & NON-BINARY CLASSICAL ARTISTS

AUGUST 3 & 4 -- A.C.T. STRAND THEATER

FEATURING KATHERINE GOFORTH, NIKOLA PRINTZ, AHYA SIMONE

WITH PIANIST TAYLOR CHAN AND HOST AFRIKA AMERICA

operaparallele.org/expansive

SAN FRANCISCO (July 20, 2023) — **Opera Parallèle**, in collaboration with **The Transgender District**, will help launch **Transgender History Month** in August with a new edition of *Expansive*, a showcase of transgender and non-binary classical artists in two performances at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, August 3 and Friday, August 4 at A.C.T.'s intimate Strand Theater, 1127 Market St.

This year's *Expansive* showcase will feature award winning classical singer **Katherine Goforth**, performing works by Mozart, Schubert, Wagner and an original British-American folksong mash up; critically acclaimed mezzo **Nikola Printz**, who will be incorporating aerial performance into their work performing music by Richard Strauss, Alma Mahler, Billie Strayhorn and David Lang; and harpist, multidisciplinary artist **Ahya Simone** in works by Debussy, Leila Negra and Henriette Renié. **Taylor Chan** will provide the artists with impeccable piano accompaniment and San Francisco's own DIVALicious Dreamgirl, **Afrika America**, will return as the evening's exuberant host.

Opera Parallèle's General & Artistic Director **Nicole Paiement** said, "Opera Parallèle is thrilled to bring these three exciting artists together in San Francisco to both kick off Transgender History Month and to create a space of celebration, joy, and music for the community. With attempts to strip rights from transgender people ongoing around the country, we're so proud to stand alongside The Transgender District to uplift their powerful voices and showcase their artistry."

President & Co-Founder of The Transgender District **Aria Sa'id**, shared “We are so thrilled for the second annual *Expansive* show in collaboration with Opera Parallèle. With anti-trans legislation and attacks, this year alone has been hard on our transgender community. To host a night that showcases our talent and joy means so much to us and we hope you all will come and bask in the greatness of our trans existence.”

ABOUT KATHERINE GOFORTH

American vocalist Katherine Goforth shares her “noble, colorful and iridescent vocal sound” (*Magazin Klassik*) in strong and heartfelt performances in her upcoming Bay Area debut. Recently, on March 31, International Transgender Day of Visibility, Goforth received the inaugural “True Voice Award” from Washington National Opera, a new award recognition developed by Kimberly Reed, Laura Kaminsky and Mark Campbell, to create more space in opera for artists who identify as transgender or nonbinary. Goforth has also received a Career Advancement Award from the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Women in Classical Music Symposium, where she was a featured speaker and gave a joint recital with Julia Bullock.

Recent appearances include the premiere of Philip Venables and Ted Huffman's *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* at Aix-en-Provence, Bregenzer Festspiele, and Manchester International Festival; Beppe in *Pagliacci* with Opera Bend; the tenor solo in Beethoven's 9th Symphony with Bozeman Symphony, Walla Walla Symphony, and Yakima Symphony; the tenor solo in Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with Vancouver Symphony (USA); Spoletta in *Tosca* with Portland Opera; stage directing *Nu Nah-Hup: Sacajawea's Story* for Opera Theater Oregon; and plays with Artists Repertory Theatre and Fuse Theatre Ensemble.

Goforth was a member of the International Opera Studio of Opera Köln; received her Bachelor's degree from St. Olaf College, her Master's degree from The Juilliard School; and attended the Franz Schubert Institut, Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, Heidelberger Frühling Liedakademie, Georg Solti Accademia, and Boston Wagner Institute.

ABOUT NIKOLA PRINTZ

Known for their “sheer stylistic range...full-throated vocalism and raw emotional honesty” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*), artistically fluid mezzo Nikola Printz uses music to communicate who they are, and not just what they can do. That sense of personal conviction was evident in their recent Schwabacher Debut Recital at San Francisco Opera Center. The *San Francisco Chronicle* named the performance one of San Francisco's Best of 2022, writing, “Listeners reveled in the beauty of Printz's singing – their lustrously dark chest tones, their elegant phrasing... such commitment and tonal splendor.”

Following three pandemic-era summers as a participant in the Merola Opera Program, Printz began their tenure as an Adler Fellow with San Francisco Opera in 2023. During SFO's centennial season, Printz covered the role of Mexican painter Frida Kahlo in the Bay Area

premiere of Gabriela Lena Frank's *El ultimo sueño de Frida y Diego*, as well as singing Imagen #2, and performed Musetta in *Bohème Out of The Box*.

Recent performance highlights include the title roles in *Carmen* and *Dido and Aeneas* with Opera San José, *L'italiana in Algeri* with Opera Memphis, *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* with Pocket Opera, *Freschi's Ermelinda* with Ars Minerva, *Orfeo ed Eurydice* with West Edge Opera, and *The Rape of Lucretia* with Green Mountain Opera Festival. They have also appeared as Elle in *La Voix humaine*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, The Fox in *Cunning Little Vixen*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*.

Printz's first musical homes were in jazz and cabaret clubs, and they are well-versed in crossover styles of singing. In addition to engagements at Yoshi's Jazz Lounge and Club 1923, Nikola also created the role of Velma Louise Cole in Boxcar Theater's immersive *Speakeasy SF* and joined San Francisco Symphony for their annual queer variety show *Holiday Gaiety*. An accomplished aerialist, Printz has also developed and performed on spinning trapeze in both grand concert halls and smoky cabaret clubs. Offstage, Printz plays several small stringed instruments, rides their bicycle around San Francisco, and pens fairly bad poetry. They are an advocate for accessibility in the arts and are currently learning ASL.

ABOUT AHYA SIMONE

Ahya Simone is an eclectically elusive siren and multidisciplinary artist from Detroit. As a harpist, composer, and filmmaker, she traverses the world of sound, moving image, and performance. Drawing inspiration from her favorite contemporary artists, she integrates R&B, soul, jazz, and experimental elements into her works and performances. These unique creations have allowed Ahya to collaborate with internationally renowned artists such as Brian Jackson, Saul Williams, Shigeto, Kelela, and Juliana Huxtable.

Ahya's practice also caught the eye of acclaimed filmmaker, dream hampton, composing music for "Treasure: From Tragedy to Trans Justice Mapping A Detroit Story" (2015) that sparked her interest in film. With the support of Detroit Narrative Agency in 2018, Ahya directed her first short film, "Femme Queen Chronicles" (co-created with Paige Wood and Brè Rivera) - a comedic story of three Black trans women living in Detroit which was lauded at film festivals across the globe. Inspired by the absurdity of life and her own share of surreal experiences, Ahya aims to share stories of epically eccentric, and comedic proportions.

ABOUT AFRIKA AMERICA

Host Afrika America is a social justice warrior, activist, producer and performer. These are just a few adjectives that characterize this phenomenal 'Drag Out the Vote Ambassador' and our host for Expansive! She produces multiple shows throughout the Bay Area under her DIVALICIOUS brand such as BQM (Black Queer Magic), DRAGtastic and Let the Games Begin: Trivia, Bingo, DRAG, WERQ and ICON! Having performed all over the world from Singapore and Cologne to Sydney and on America's Got Talent, she toured the south in 2017 with SWAG, (Singers with a Goal) and the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, and was a featured performer in the documentary, *Gay Chorus: Deep South*.

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO'S TRANSGENDER DISTRICT

The Transgender District was co-founded by three black trans women in 2017, originally as Compton's Transgender Cultural District, it is the first legally recognized transgender district in the world. The district encompasses six blocks in the southeastern Tenderloin crossing over Market St. and two blocks of 6th St. The District's mission is to create and preserve an urban environment that fosters the rich history, culture, legacy, and empowerment of transgender people and its deep roots in the southeastern Tenderloin neighborhood. It aims to stabilize and economically empower the transgender community through ownership of homes, businesses, historic and cultural sites, and safe community spaces.

Funding for *Expansive* is provided, in part, by **Alaska Airlines, U.S. Bank, and a Civic Practice Grant from OPERA America's Opera Fund.**

OP's Bullhorn Community Programs, including *Expansive*, are supported in part by the **Henry W. Robinson & Nettie Robinson Foundation and Bill Graham Memorial Foundation.**

Opera Parallèle's *Expansive* initiative and its partnership with The Transgender District is part of the next evolution of the company's robust Bullhorn community programs. This innovation is designed to uplift and inspire, to activate and initiate, and to challenge expectations of what an opera company can be or do. The company's goal is to be a "Bullhorn" for the community and build long lasting relationships particularly within the Bay Area's LGBTQ and BIPOC communities.

Tickets for this year's *Expansive* showcase are available online via operaparallele.org/expansive. Ticket prices are \$10 (low income/community members), \$25 (general admission) and \$50 (Pay It Forward). At both performances, the first five rows of the theater will be held and distributed for free by The Transgender District to other community organizations supporting the transgender community in the Tenderloin. For further information, visit operaparallele.org.

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