

COLLEGE OF ARTS + ARCHITECTURE

# 2025/26 PERFORMANCES



# Welcome!

We are pleased that you have come to our theaters to support the performing arts at UNC Charlotte. At a time when so much of life is experienced through screens, we celebrate the opportunity to be in this place together.

Live performance is different. There is an energy, a connection with the performers and with fellow audience members that is special.

These are days in which it is important to gather, to share space and stories, to witness beauty, to feel and to learn in the presence of others. Thank you for being here! You are a vital part of the performance experience, and we are grateful for your curiosity and participation.

Look for us, too, throughout the Charlotte community, where you will frequently encounter the creativity and expertise of our faculty, students, and alumni.

We hope you will join us again soon! Stay up to date with our College news and programming on our website at [coaa.charlotte.edu](https://coaa.charlotte.edu).

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
**CHARLOTTE**  
COLLEGE OF ARTS + ARCHITECTURE

The Department of Music presents  
The Faculty & Friends Concert Series

# Voice Area Showcase

*featuring*

Brian Arreola, tenor  
Sequina DuBose, soprano  
Susan Gouthro, soprano  
Monica Hunter, soprano  
Christina Pier, soprano

*with*

Claudio Olivera, piano

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Rowe Recital Hall  
Rowe Arts Building  
Tuesday, March 24, 2026 | 7:30 pm  
[coaa.charlotte.edu](https://coaa.charlotte.edu)

# Program

## **Mirabai Songs**

John Harbison  
(b. 1938)

- I. It's True, I Went to the Market
- II. All I was Doing was Breathing
- III. Why Mira Can't Go Back to Her Old House
- IV. Where Did You Go?
- V. The Clouds
- VI. Don't Go, Don't Go

Susan Gouthro, soprano  
Kaustavi Sarkar, dancer

## **Vier Letzte Lieder**

Richard Strauss  
(1864-1949)

- I. Frühling (Spring)
- II. September

Christina Pier, soprano

- III. Beim Schlafengehen (When Falling Asleep)  
with David Russell, violin
- IV. Im Abendrot (At Sunset)

Monica Hunter, soprano

**Songs from *West Side Story***

Leonard Bernstein  
(1918-1990)

"Tonight" (Balcony Scene)

Brian Arreola, tenor  
Sequina DuBose, soprano

"A Boy Like That/I Have A Love"

Ashlyn Clark '26, mezzo-soprano  
Sequina DuBose, soprano

**Love Let the Wind Cry...How I Adore Thee**

Undine Smith Moore  
(1904-1989)

Sequina DuBose, soprano

# Translations

## Vier Letzte Lieder

### I. Frühling

In dämmrigen Grüften  
Träumte ich lang  
Von deinen Bäumen und  
blauen Lüften,  
Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.  
Nun liegst du erschlossen  
In Gleiß und Zier,  
Von Licht übergossen  
Wie ein Wunder vor mir.  
Du kennst mich wieder,  
Du lockst mich zart,  
Es zittert durch all meine Glieder  
Deine selige Gegenwart!

by Hermann Hesse, 1899  
(1877-1962)

### II. September

Der Garten trauert,  
Kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.  
Der Sommer schauert  
Still seinem Ende entgegen.  
Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt  
Nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.  
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt  
In den sterbenden Gartentraum.  
Lange noch bei den Rosen  
Bleibt er stehen,  
sehnt sich nach Ruh.  
Langsam tut er die großen  
Müdgewordnen Augen zu.

by Hermann Hesse, 1927

### I. Spring

In dusky vaults  
I have long dreamt  
of your trees and  
blue skies,  
of your scents and the songs of birds.  
Now you lie revealed  
in glistening splendour,  
flushed with light,  
like a wonder before me.  
You know me again,  
you beckon tenderly to me;  
all of my limbs quiver  
from your blissful presence!

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### II. September

The garden is mourning,  
the rain sinks coolly into the flowers.  
Summer shudders  
as it meets its end.  
Leaf upon leaf drops golden  
down from the lofty acacia.  
Summer smiles, astonished and weak,  
in the dying garden dream.  
For a while still by the roses  
it remains standing,  
yearning for peace.  
Slowly it closes its large  
eyes grown weary.

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### III. Beim Schlafengehen

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,  
Soll mein sehnliches Verlangen  
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht  
Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.  
Hände, laßt von allem Tun,  
Stirn vergiß du alles Denken,  
Alle meine Sinne nun  
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.  
Und die Seele unbewacht  
Will in freien Flügen schweben,  
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht  
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.

by Hermann Hesse, 1911

### IV. Im Abendrot

Wir sind durch Not und Freude  
Gegangen Hand in Hand,  
Vom Wandern ruhen wir  
Nun überm stillen Land.  
Rings sich die Thäler neigen,  
Es dunkelt schon die Luft,  
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen  
Nachträumend in den Duft.  
Tritt her, und laß sie schwirren,  
Bald ist es Schlafenszeit,  
Daß wir uns nicht verirren  
In dieser Einsamkeit.  
O weiter stiller Friede!  
So tief im Abendrot,  
Wie sind wir wandermüde —  
Ist dies etwa der Tod?

by Joseph Karl Benedikt, Freiherr  
von Eichendorff (1788-1857)

### III. When Falling Asleep

Now that the day has made me so tired,  
my dearest longings shall  
be accepted kindly by the starry night  
like a weary child.  
Hands, cease your activity,  
head, forget all of your thoughts;  
all my senses now  
will sink into slumber.  
And my soul, unobserved,  
will float about on untrammelled wings  
in the enchanted circle of the night,  
living a thousandfold more deeply.

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### IV. At Sunset

Through adversity and joy  
We've gone hand in hand;  
We rest now from our wanderings  
Upon this quiet land.  
Around us slope the valleys,  
The skies grow dark;  
Two larks alone are just climbing,  
As if after a dream, into the scented air.  
Come here and let them whirl past,  
For it will soon be time to rest;  
We do not wish to get lost  
In this solitude.  
O wide, quiet peace,  
So deep in the red dusk...  
How weary we are of our travels —  
Is this perhaps— death?

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# Program Notes

## Mirabai Songs

Mirabai's ecstatic religious poetry was written in 16<sup>th</sup>-century India. When she was 27, her husband was killed in a war. Mirabai refused to die on her husband's funeral pyre, as was the custom. Instead, she left her family compound, wrote her poems to Krishna, the Dark One, and sang and danced them in the streets.

Browsing in a library one day, John Harbison discovered English translations by Robert Bly of Mirabai's original texts which were written in an indigenous Indian language from Rajasthan. The unusual combination of religious and erotic themes in the text inspired John Harbison to set these poems to music. The chosen six songs tell the story of Mirabai's obsession and love affair with Krishna, from "buying" him at the market, to longing for him, loving him, becoming one with him, being deserted by him, and eventually sacrificing herself to be with him in eternity.

We have chosen to expand traditional art song performance into a dramatic storytelling format using Odissi dance and the principles of *Abhinaya*. Developed and utilized in the cultural and artistic practices of India, *Abhinaya* is the art of using gesture, posture, costume and facial expression to enhance the dramatic potential of a performance.

## Vier letzte Lieder

Richard Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder* serves as a poignant final chapter to a career defined by a lifelong devotion to the human voice. While his operas, including *Salome*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*, remain staples of the stage, Strauss also produced more than 200 Lieder. The vast majority of these were composed in his youth, and his return to the genre in 1948 brought his creative journey full circle.

In contrast to the intimate, balanced relationship between voice and piano in earlier Romantic Lieder, these pieces bridge nineteenth-century tradition and twentieth-century innovation through lush orchestration and

chromaticism. Strauss treats the vocal line as a solo instrument interwoven into the dense texture. This writing demands a sizable voice with the expansive breath support and flexibility required to sustain presence throughout long phrases and a wide vocal range. Consequently, in a piano-only performance, the pianist is tasked with the monumental challenge of navigating a reduction not originally intended for the keyboard, while creating the illusion of resonance and the vast color palette of a 100-piece orchestra. Together, and without a conductor, both performers must coordinate the intricate, independent rhythms and shifting harmonies that define his late compositional style.

This cycle emerged at the end of Strauss's life, following World War II, when he was living in exile in Switzerland. He was profoundly affected by the destruction of the German opera in houses that had defined his career, and spent much of his energy writing letters that went unread to cultural leaders. His son, Franz, was dismayed and urged him to "stop moping and write one last great piece of music," specifically suggesting a return to Lieder (Gilliam).

The resulting songs, based on poetry by Hermann Hesse and Joseph von Eichendorff, serve as a final meditation on the passages of life. The cycle moves from rebirth and awakening to the mourning of summer's end, through the soul's preparation for rest, and finally to a couple watching a sunset, wondering, "Is this, perhaps, death?" On the final word, "Tod" (death), the music quotes a theme he used sixty years earlier in his tone poem *Death and Transfiguration*. This passage also features a horn solo, no doubt a tribute to his father, a nineteenth-century horn virtuoso. Pianist and critic Glenn Gould reflected on the depth of Strauss's late works and described him as a composer who "provided a synthesis of all the musical resources that had been accumulating for three hundred years" (Gould).

Given his fifty-five-year marriage to soprano Pauline de Ahne, it comes as no surprise that Strauss composed these pieces, and a wealth of others, for soprano. Their relationship was somewhat spirited, and fully supports the theory that "opposites attract." He was a passive, disciplined, modest man who viewed composing as a job; by contrast, she was eccentric, volatile, and socially blunt. Once during rehearsal, she famously threw a score at Strauss's head, to which he reportedly replied, "I'm going to marry

her!" (Gilliam). He credits her fiery personality as motivation and fuel for his creative inspiration. Though not formally dedicated to her, it is widely believed that she and their life together are at the emotional core of this work. He died in 1949 with a fifth song still in progress. The title *Vier letzte Lieder* was provided posthumously by his publisher, Ernst Roth. Pauline passed away only eight months later, and just nine days before the London premiere performed by Kirsten Flagstad at the Royal Albert Hall.

## **Songs from *West Side Story***

*West Side Story* reimagines Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* within the cultural tensions of 1950's New York City, where love and conflict intersect between rival communities.

"Tonight" (Balcony Scene) captures the exhilaration and urgency of young love as Tony and Maria imagine a future beyond the divisions that surround them. In contrast, "A Boy Like That / I Have a Love" reveals the emotional aftermath of violence, as Anita and Maria confront grief, anger, and ultimately a shared sense of loss. Together, these duets trace the arc of the central relationship, from idealized love to tragic consequence, highlighting Leonard Bernstein's expressive score and Stephen Sondheim's incisive lyricism.

## **Love Let the Wind Cry...How I Adore Thee**

Often referred to as the "Dean of Black Women Composers," Undine Smith Moore made significant contributions to American art song through works that center Black poetic voices and musical traditions.

"Love Let the Wind Cry...How I Adore Thee" sets a text by ancient Greek poet Sappho, blending classical poetry with Moore's distinctly expressive harmonic language. The song unfolds as an intimate meditation on love and longing, with fluid vocal lines and nuanced shifts in color that reflect both restraint and emotional depth.

Moore's setting elevates the timelessness of the text while offering a deeply personal and lyrical expression of devotion, characteristic of her broader commitment to amplifying diverse voices within the art song tradition.

## Faculty Biographies



Tenor [Brian Arreola](#) has been featured with IN Series (Washington, DC), Minnesota Opera, Opera Carolina, Toledo Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, New Orleans Opera, Iford Opera (UK), and others. Of his debut with Toledo Opera *The Blade* enthused, “Tenor Brian Arreola created a Roméo whose persona churned from petulant adolescent to ardent lover. His voice was rich, lyric, and particularly expressive in the final death duet.” An advocate of new music by composers from underrepresented groups, he recorded a CD of art songs by Asian and Asian-American composers, *The Boy Who Drew Cats*, on the Albany Records label and has sung multiple premieres of operas by Asian-American composers. As a composer, his opera *Zavala Zavala* was featured on IN Series' 40th season, with a performance at the Kennedy Center. GALA Hispanic Theatre (Washington, DC), produced a re-mount of *Zavala Zavala* in 2024, with Arreola conducting. He is Professor of Voice and Opera Workshop at UNC Charlotte.



[Sequina DuBose](#) is Associate Professor of Classical and Contemporary Voice and Coordinator of the Musical Theatre Certificate Program at UNC Charlotte. She has performed nationally and internationally with, among others, Opera Carolina, the Virginia Arts Festival, Michigan Opera Theatre, Tulsa Symphony, and the Royal Danish Opera. She toured nationally with Kathleen Battle in *Underground Railroad: A Spiritual Journey*, culminating in a performance at the Metropolitan Opera. Her concert appearances include featured performances with the American Spiritual Ensemble, Chorale Le Chateau, and as a soloist in Wynton Marsalis' *Abyssinian Mass* with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. She has also appeared with the Charlotte Symphony, Charlotte Master Chorale, and Western Piedmont Symphony, and as soloist in the Southeastern premiere of Margaret Bonds' *Credo* at the Margaret Bonds Symposium at Queens University of Charlotte.

Committed to contemporary repertoire, she has premiered works by Rachel Peters, Nkeiru Okoye, Leonard Mark Lewis, Maria Corely, writing team Peter Hilliard and Matt Boresi, and Rebecca Tryon, to name a few. Her recordings include *Blurred Lines: 21st Century Hybrid Vocal Literature* (Albany Records) and *Moments in Sonder* by B.E. Boykin, recorded for nationwide classical public radio distribution. She is currently preparing *Bonds Unsung* (Parma Recordings), a recording of lesser-known works by composer Margaret Bonds scheduled for release in 2026.



For over a decade, soprano [Susan Gouthro](#) was engaged as a full-time soloist at the opera house in Kiel, Germany. Here she performed over fifty roles in the lyric soprano repertoire, including favorites Donna Anna, Fiordiligi, Micaela, Marguerite, Manon, Liu, Mimi, Violetta, and Rosalinde. In 2015/2016, Susan Gouthro was celebrated as the opera-diva Carlotta in *The Phantom of the Opera* in Germany, singing eight shows a week in over 300 performances in a production cast and rehearsed by the creative team from *Phantom* on Broadway.

Having performed contemporary music at The Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, The Britten-Pears School in England, and in Germany with two world premieres, Susan Gouthro strives to present works by living composers. She currently teaches voice and voice-related courses at UNC Charlotte as Assistant Professor of Music.



[Monica Hunter](#) received the DMA from the University of Michigan, the MM in Vocal Performance from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, and the BA in Music from Texas Wesleyan University, graduating magna cum laude. She completed additional study at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Dr. Hunter has taught for the

School of Music at Western Michigan University and at Grand Valley State University. Most recently, she served as Senior Lecturer of Music and Director of Voice Studies at Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA.

As a soprano soloist, Monica Griffin Hunter has been featured in Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Handel's *Messiah*, J.S. Bach's *Magnificat*, Rutter's *Requiem*, among many others. Her operatic experience includes the roles of Michaela in Bizet's *Carmen*, the *Theory of Everything* Suite by John David Earnest, the Mother in *Hansel and Gretel*, Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi*.

Among Dr. Hunter's distinctions and awards are two fellowships from Rice University and the prestigious Golden Shears Award from Texas Wesleyan University, where she was also named Music Major of the Year in 2000. Her professional affiliations include membership in the National Association of the Teachers of Singing, Alpha Chi National Honor Society, and Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity for Women. In March 2022, she was invited by the esteemed American Choral Composer, Morten Lauridsen, to perform his *Six Duets for Mixed Voices and Piano* in Chicago with renowned baritone, Jeremy Huw Williams for a weekend celebration of the composer's works. Other areas of interest include promoting performances of African American Spirituals and music by female composers.



[Claudio Olivera](#), pianist, began his musical studies in Venezuela at age 8 and debuted as a soloist with orchestra at 12. A prize-winning performer, he earned the Van Cliburn Award at the Interlochen Arts Camp and received top honors in competitions such as the Yamaha Piano Competition (2002) and I Salón Nacional de Pianistas de Venezuela (2006-07).

He has performed with nearly every major Venezuelan orchestra and internationally in Germany, Italy, Chile, Spain, France, and the U.S. Notable appearances include Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 3* with the RIAS Berlin International Youth Orchestra at the Rachmaninoff Festival in Catania, Italy. He obtained his undergrad degree in Production Engineering at the Universidad Simón Bolívar in Caracas, Venezuela. He also holds a Pianist Certificate from Juan José Landaeta Conservatory and a Master's in Piano and Pedagogy from Germany's Martin Luther

Universität Halle-Wittenberg, supported by a DAAD scholarship. He later earned a Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance from the University of South Carolina under Dr. Marina Lomazov.

A dedicated educator and collaborator, he has served as Adjunct Piano Faculty and Staff Accompanist at USC, received the Yamaha In-Residency Fellowship for innovative community engagement, and was a three-time recipient of the Steinway & Sons Top Teacher Award (2018, 2019, 2021). Since 2020, he has also worked in audio/video editing and livestream production for the Four Seasons Chamber Music Festival, Seattle Chamber Music Society, and Vivace Music Foundation. Based in Charlotte since 2021, Olivera often collaborates with Opera Carolina, is the main accompanist for Queen City Performing Arts. In 2025 he joined the UNC Charlotte Department of Music as Departmental Pianist.



Hailed by *Opera News* for her “big, gleaming soprano and impressive coloratura,” [Christina Pier](#) has established herself as an artist accomplished in navigating an expansive repertoire with technical assuredness and stylistic nuance. From Bach to Wagner, she has earned widespread acclaim from critics and audiences alike. In 2003, Christina Pier gained

significant recognition as a Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. This success, along with honors from the George London and Sullivan Awards, paved the way for a distinguished operatic career. She is noted for her portrayals of Mozart’s Donna Anna, the Countess, and Fiordiligi, as well as Micaëla in *Carmen*, Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer*, and the title role in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Her successes in these roles include performances on the stages of Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Minnesota Opera, Nashville Opera, and Virginia Opera, and Opera Carolina.

A sought-after concert soloist, Ms. Pier has performed with major American ensembles, including the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and Rochester Philharmonic, as well as the North Carolina, Winston-Salem, and Charlotte Symphonies in her home

state. Her international profile includes engagements with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, the Calgary Philharmonic, and the World Youth Orchestra, performing in Italy and at the United Nations General Assembly Hall in New York. Discography credits include Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* with the BBC Singers on the Naxos label. This summer, she joins the Sun Valley Music Festival as a featured soloist and guest clinician.

Originally from Flagstaff, Arizona, Ms. Pier earned her degrees from Indiana University, where she studied with the legendary Virginia Zeani. As an educator with over 20 years of experience, she shares her love for the artistic process as a guest clinician and through faculty positions at UNC Charlotte and Davidson College.



[David Russell](#), the Anne R. Belk Distinguished Professor of Violin, served on the violin faculty of The Cleveland Institute of Music for 24 years prior to coming to UNC Charlotte. He has been a faculty member at some of the world's most important summer music festivals and academies and has been designated a "Distinguished Member of the Jury" for international violin competitions in Switzerland, Argentina, and the United States. His students have won major violin competitions, signed with prestigious managements, and earned coveted positions with top orchestras in the U.S. and abroad. Russell serves as a master teacher for iClassical Academy. His newest album, *Andalusian Legacy*, was released by Albany Records last year.



Founder of the *Odissi Odyssey* conference held annually at UNC Charlotte, [Kaustavi Sarkar](#) is an Associate Professor in the Dance Department. Sarkar has a dual career in professional Odissi performance, touring for the past two decades in this east Indian traditional art form. In a recent review of a February 2025 performance in New Delhi,

India, critic Ashish Mohan Khokar wrote that in her dance “one saw clarity of poses and emotional range.” Sarkar investigates virtuosity in dance-theater as fostered in traditional Indian aesthetics through her research on choreography and creative processes. Her book *Dance Technology and Social Justice: Individual and Collective Emancipation Through Embodied Techniques* (McFarland, 2024) has been featured in Dance Studies Association’s 2024-2025 Reading Seminars. A leader in dance scholarship, Sarkar founded the journal *South Asian Dance Intersections*.

## Support the Department of Music

The Music Department's Chair's Excellence Fund supports student welfare, class supplies, scholarship assistance, recruiting, lecture series, school-wide events, promotion, and related needs.

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# College of Arts + Architecture

## Upcoming Events

### MARCH

#### [Nouveau Now](#)

Presented by the Departments of Dance and Music

Sat Mar 28 | 7:30 pm

Sun Mar 29 | 2:00 pm

Carolina Theatre, Uptown

#### [Gospel Choir](#)

Mon Mar 30 | 7:30 pm

Rowe Recital Hall

### APRIL

#### [Elizabeth Sullivan with Nick Ritter](#)

Faculty & Friends Concert Series

Tue Apr 7 | 7:30 pm

Rowe Recital Hall

*Sensory friendly performance*

#### [Cabaret](#)

Book by Joe Masteroff

Music by John Kander, Lyrics by Fred Ebb

Thu Apr 16–Sat Apr 18 | 7:30 pm

Sat Apr 18 & Sun Apr 19\* | 2:00 pm

Anne R. Belk Theater

*\*ASL Interpretation on Sun 4/19*

*Closed Captioning in English & German available at all performances*

#### [Jazz Combos & Ensemble](#)

Tue Apr 21 | 7:30 pm

Anne R. Belk Theater

#### [Wind Ensemble & Symphonic Band](#)

Wed Apr 22 | 7:30 pm

Anne R. Belk Theater

#### [Orchestra](#)

Thu Apr 23 | 7:30 pm

Anne R. Belk Theater

#### [Women's & Men's Choirs](#)

Tue Apr 28 | 7:30 pm (W) & 8:30 pm (M)

Anne R. Belk Theater

#### [University Chorale](#)

Wed Apr 29 | 7:30 pm

Anne R. Belk Theater

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## **About the College of Arts + Architecture**

The College of Arts + Architecture promotes the arts and design as engines of civic imagination through distinction in creative teaching and research, artistic performance, and community-driven work.

Through investigations in the performing and visual arts, design and affiliated pursuits, we provoke thought, cultivate aesthetic sensibilities, make space for memory and reflection, instigate creative action, and help build communities.

Established in 2008, the College of Arts + Architecture represents over 1,000 students and more than 100 full-time faculty members in five creative disciplines: art and art history, architecture, dance, music, and theatre.

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