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The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame presents SPOON RIVER HOUSE FESTIVAL

September 13-15, 20-22

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Black Voices in Cabaret presents

Reimagining Cabaret: Journey through the Genres



Margaret Murphy Webb, emcee/singer
Theodis Rodgers, Jr., musical director/pianist
Lynn Colbert-Jones, producer/director
Evelyn Danner
Patrick Davis
Meiya Fitzhugh
Sean Harris
Rae-Myra Hilliard
Randolph Johnson
Lynne Jordan
Holly McGuire
Madeline Morgan
Margaret Murphy Webb
Sonia Oyola
Patricia Tyson
Gabriel Valentino
Dion Walton
Darcelle Williams
Eugene Williams



Wednesday, September 18, 7 pm
Logan Center for the Arts Theater
University of Chicago 915 E 60th St

Logan Center Box office:
bit.ly/Reimagine-cabaret
Tickets from \$20 to \$55

blackvoicesincabaret.org

***Reimagining Cabaret:
Journey through the genres
September 18, 2024***

at the Logan Center for the Arts

MUSIC DIRECTOR/PIANIST Theodis Rodgers, Jr.
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER Lynn Colbert-Jones
EMCEE/VOCALIST Margaret Murphy Webb
BASSIST Ron Hall
DRUMMER Malcom Banks
VIDEOGRAPHY by Jahi Entertainment

THE PERFORMERS:

Evelyn Danner	Madeline Morgan
Patrick Davis	Margaret Murphy Webb
Meiya Fitzhugh	Sonia Oyola
Sean Harris	Patricia Tyson
Rae-Myra Hilliard	Gabriel Valentino
Randolph Johnson	Dion Walton
Lynne Jordan	Darcelle Williams
Holly McGuire	Eugene Williams

THE PROGRAM

From swing to soul, from Broadway to the opera house, from jazz to blues, we're taking a Southside trip through the wide world of cabaret. Our multi-genre selections will be drawn from these titles!

- *A Song for You*
- *Ah, mes amis*
- *Ain't Misbehavin'*
- *Again*
- *Change We Can Believe In*
- *Easy*
- *Everything I've Got*
- *Feelin' Good*
- *Getting Some Fun out of Life*
- *Human Nature*
- *I Told You So*
- *Killing Me Softly*
- *People Make the World Go 'Round*
- *Polka Dot and Moonbeams*
- *Quimbara*
- *Return to Paradise*
- *Since I Fell for You*
- *Sodade*
- *Them There Eyes*
- *Tis Sunset in the Garden*
- *What Becomes of the Broken Hearted*
- *When I'm Gone*
- *Why Try to Change Me Now*

BLACK VOICES IN CABARET (BVIC):

DIRECTOR'S NOTES — Lynn Colbert-Jones

As the director and producer of *Reimagining Cabaret: Journey Through the Genres*, I am honored to present an evening that not only celebrates the timeless art of cabaret but also reclaims its place in the heart of the Black community. Through the voices of our 15 singers, we will journey across musical genres, showing how this kind of gathering has always been a space of freedom, expression, and connection. Our goal is to reignite the love for this versatile and intimate art form and re-engage this generation of music lovers. I invite you to experience the vibrancy and diversity of cabaret like never before.

A BRIEF HISTORY of BVIC

The founding director of BVIC, David Stephens, was spurred to action upon reading an article on "Why Is Color Mostly Absent from Cabaret Stages?" He himself had followed his spouse into cabaret, but was confused and disturbed to be often the only person of color, in the audience or onstage. He and other Black performers who had met through SongShop and the Cabaret Connexion turned to Claudia Hommel and the umbrella nonprofit organization, Working In Concert, to establish a home for this new initiative.

David wrote "our mission should be to showcase Black performers, educate new audiences about the history of Chicago cabaret as seen through Black eyes, and uplift the repertoire beyond the standard American Songbook. With Black Voices in Cabaret, we hope to explore a wide variety of performing styles and to highlight both new and established performers. We also plan to engage both audiences and communities who have not been exposed to the art of cabaret with shows, seminars, and other events."

Cabaret shines best when it is as variegated as the world we live in. Welcome to Black Voices in Cabaret.

Find us at blackvoicesinvoices.org.

Join us at our next show, Saturday, December 7, at the Epiphany Center for the Arts.

BLACK VOICES IN CABARET

Director/Producer **Lynn Colbert-Jones**, is an award-winning lyricist, songwriter, producer, and impresario with over three decades of experience in the music industry. A Chicago native, Lynn is celebrated for her elegant songwriting, collaborations with renowned artists, and her role as a connector and promoter of talent. She created and hosts the acclaimed platforms "Composers' Café" and "Good Hearts Club Music Jam", fostering a global community of musicians and singers. Lynn also serves on several prestigious boards and committees, including the Jazz Institute of Chicago, JEXA Awards Los Angeles, and Working In Concert.

Evelyn Danner is a vocalist/actor/teacher and costumer. She has been with Chicago's Black Ensemble Theater for more than 25 years, singing, dancing, acting and often as "Miraculous Wardrobe Mistress". Most recently, she was costume designer for Goodman Theater's *Gem of the Ocean*. With more than 20 musical productions to her performance credit, Evelyn has portrayed the legendary jazz great Ella Fitzgerald in four different productions. She serves in the music ministry of her home church, Covenant Faith Church of God. She is a founding member of Black Voices in Cabaret.

T. Patrick Davis is a Chicago born vocalist known to masterfully belt and croon blues, soul, pop, jazz, and rock genres in his resonant voice. With his trademark fedoras, he can excite an audience to dance or have them swoon at his rich vocal style. T. Patrick has performed in Chicago Cabaret Professional's *Musical Mondays*, *Merry Measures*, and *Strut Your Stuff*, in Working In Concert's SongShop Live and Black Voices in Cabaret concerts, 3 Minutes in the Spotlight, Opportunity Knocks, Harris House of Music, and OTSM Blues Band Live Ensembles. T. Patrick sold out *Drew & Patrick Sing All-Time Favorites* at Davenport's in 2022 and Epiphany Center of the Arts in 2023. He performs every season with his blues & soul band l'ensemble at Rosa's Lounge. T. Patrick is planning a solo blues jazz show for late 2025.

Meiya Fitzhugh was born and raised in and around Chicago. The turning point in her musical journey was a chance attendance at a concert at the Old Town School of Folk Music. That led

to two decades of vocal and guitar classes, and the opportunity to be a part of a community that has changed her life. "The valuable lessons I've learned aren't only matters of technique or theory —there's also the act of challenging myself, being vulnerable on stage, and sharing with an audience through music."

Sean Harris. An extraordinary singer with a rich and varied voice and repertoire, Sean has a firm commitment to conveying his songs to each member of the audience. Singing from lyric baritone to lyric tenor and countertenor, Sean has been deeply influenced by the likes of Mario Lanza for opera and Neapolitans, Johnny Mathis for pop, and his favorite jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald. With a repertoire that includes rhythm and blues, jazz, French cabaret, opera and oratorio, art songs and Broadway, Sean was mentored by pianist/band leader Joe Vito who said: "His is an unbelievable voice; you have to hear him live to fathom Sean's smooth transitions between musical styles." In demand from churches to senior centers, he performs often with pianist Geo Cooper and violinist Edgar Gabriel. He is featured singing in French and English on the two-CD set of the *Jazz Faure Project* (jazzfaure.com). He offers private voice lessons and can be reached by phone at 773-744-6537.

Rae-Myra Hilliard as an active recitalist regularly programs works featuring Black-American composers/lyricists or works written for a classical singer of color. Her debut CD, *Lifescapes: One Woman's Journey* is a compilation of songs written by Black-American composers. Her Christmas CD featuring classical and popular works is underway. Her operatic roles include the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Serena in *Porgy & Bess*, and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. As a concert artist, Rae-Myra has performed Ralph Vaughn Williams' *Serenade to Music*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and Saint-Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio*. She teaches at the University of St. Francis, the Music Institute of Chicago, and Evanston Township High School. Rae-Myra is also the Music Director at St. James Lutheran Church in Lake Forest, IL. Her newest project is a lecture series entitled *Queens of Composition: Excellence in the music by Black-*

American Women". She holds her MM from the University of Northern Iowa and is a member of NATS, AGMA, and the National Association of Negro Musicians through the R. Nathaniel Dett Club.

Randolph Johnson, a native Chicagoan, is honored to work with BVIC. He has received excellent reviews for his portrayal of Charlie in *The Bridges of Madison County* (4 Jeff Awards); Horse in Kokandy's *Full Monty*, and Blood in ETA's production of *Every Night When The Sun Goes Down* a BTAA nomination for Cousin Acey in *The Clara Ward Story* at Open Door Theatre. Other Chicago roles include Amonasro, Aida's father in the Bailiwick Chicago's *Aida*, Philmore in Pegasus Players' *Jitney* (BTAA's award for Best Ensemble). Not to mention, Booker T. Washington in *Ragtime* at Porchlight Music Theatre and Big Noise Theatre; Bailiwick Theatre's *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* and Newt Lee in *Parade* (Jeff Citations). He was a featured vocalist for the Max Roach Trio and U of I Black Chorus, Chicago Chamber Opera. He is a James Scholar with a Masters in Music Ed. (vocal/instrumental) from the University of Illinois.

Holly McGuire. A veteran of the Chicago scene, Holly brings her own unique interpretation to jazz, pop, and blues. She began as an opening act for comedians and the famous Minsky's Burlesque at the Chicago Playboy Club. She brought Chicago-inspired music to outdoor festivals, dinner cruises on Lake Michigan, corporate events, weddings, and Andy's Jazz Club, appearing on the same bill with Roberta Flack and Dave Koz. Holly joined the Steve Sandner Quartet and toured many Midwestern resorts and clubs, and together they recorded and released the CD *Catch 38*, covering contemporary jazz standards. Holly was a part of the Ken Arlen Orchestra and Jeff Stitely Orchestra, performing for over 300,000 at Poland's Woodstock Music Festival. Now singing with Chicago Bar Association Choir, she has soloed at St. James Cathedral, Harold Washington Library, Lincoln Academy of Illinois Ceremony, with performances at Fourth Presbyterian Jazz service and Unity Chicago with a Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase.

Madeline Morgan got her music education the old fashioned way—from a family who believed in performance and were performers themselves. Her style is laid-back and her musical preference is jazz. She has sung in church choirs, community

choirs and the Sounds Good seniors choir. She has performed at Davenport's Cabaret several times, produced and directed projects *Ella and Sarah* with Judy Narcisse, at Infinity and her Luncheon Jazz series. She is a member of Chicago Cabaret Professionals.

Margaret Murphy-Webb is an award-winning entertainer crediting her unique vocal style and showmanship to the tutelage of legendary Chicago tenor saxophonist Von Freeman. Margaret has been featured at the Taste of Chicago, Winona Indiana Jazz Festival, Mississippi Valley Blues Festival, Hyde Park Jazz Festival, The Green Mill, Jazz Showcase, Winters Jazz Club among other Chicago festivals and jazz venues. She had the honor of performing for both Presidents Obama and Clinton, as well as ambassadors from Russia and Poland. Margaret is executive director of the nonprofit South Side Jazz Coalition which presents free live jazz, offers mentoring programs and advocates for Chicago musicians. Margaret was co-chair of The Year of Chicago Music 2020/21 and a member of the Chicago Cultural Council

Sonia Oyola, born in Santa Marta, Colombia and raised in the US, has been singing since the age of one. She started taking lessons at the Old Town School of Folk Music in 2010. Her first solo show, *Sonia and Bob Sing For You* with Bob Solone as accompanist and collaborator, debuted in 2021 at Le Piano, followed by sold out shows of *Songs We Love* and *Fear Not: Songs We Love #2* in 2022 and 2024 at Davenport's Cabaret. They are excited for their upcoming show October 2024 at Davenport's *Love Songs 3.0*. During the pandemic, her work as a family medicine physician led to many hours of reflection culminating in writing poetry and her first songs: "Finding My Way" and "Te Siento" with Bob Solone and "Rain" with Sami Scot. She is currently in two bands Libélulas and Para Mujeres which explore the worlds of Latin Jazz and traditional boleros. Sonia's life mission is to relieve suffering through mindfulness, kindness, joy, the promotion of compassion, and music.

Theodis Rodgers, Jr, Music Director, is an American Jazz pianist and multi-keyboardist from Chicago, Illinois. He has worked in theater, television and motion pictures as a performer, composer, arranger, producer and music conductor/director both nationally and

internationally. He has been music director / keyboardist for Curtis Mayfield, Patti LaBelle, Angela Bofill, Jennifer Holiday, Sarah Vaughn, Ramsey Lewis, Freddie Hubbard, The Emotions and Dennis De Young. Theodis is a former member of the funk/rock band Love Craft. He co-wrote music for the movie *A Family Thing* featuring Robert DuVall and James Earl Jones. For the stage, he has served as musical director and/or pianist for *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Dreamgirls* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. He is currently Music Director for Teatro Zinzanni Chicago. He travels internationally with his piano and organ Jazz trio, including the 2023 Chicago Jazz Festival, Jazz Showcase and Winters Jazz Club. His new music album release *Hot Jazz* can be found on all streaming platforms.

Patricia E. Tyson is a Chicago native, a registered nurse with a strong background in hospice and palliative care. Her life's passion, however, is music. Patricia is a composer, choral director and a classically trained vocalist and concert pianist. She has composed over 500 hymns, choral works, and songs of inspiration. Patricia's intention is to inspire and encourage the singers and listeners, to affect a change for positivity and to consider a more excellent way of living, doing, and being.

Gabriel Valentino emanates music, singing and composing R&B, hip hop, house, salsa, soul, gospel, reggae, reggaeton, folk, jazz, country, pop, and more. Born in the Chicagoland area by way of Panamá, Gabriel has performed as a singer, songwriter, dancer, and actor throughout Chicago. He sang with the Chicago Cabaret Professionals (CCP) in *Broadway Soul* at the Black Ensemble Theater and Cultural Center. He has performed his self-written & composed original music at Navy Pier, the Promontory, Le Piano, Davenport's Piano Bar & Cabaret, among other venues. He also performs with the Chicago Community Choir, a contemporary gospel choir originating from the historic First Baptist Congregational Church of Chicago. An individual of multiple talents, Gabriel describes his state of being often as "Soulful & Serene". He supports and promotes his soulful vibes via his social media presence: Umami Memories: Savoring, Story, Song, & Soul."

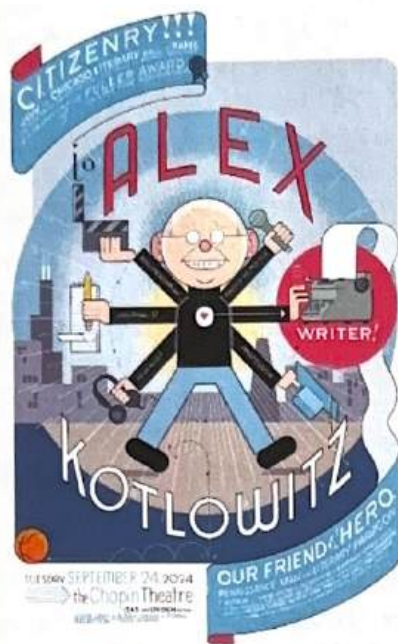
In 2024: **Dion Walton** is a 71-year-young performing artist, working singer, actor and artist with artwork in galleries throughout Chicagoland.

Dion is a 20-year veteran of Second Story as writer, reader, and director and 30-year veteran of the Goodman Theater's "Generations" program. He worked for two years at the Center on Halsted to inspire some of Chicago's gay homeless youth of color by creating and directing the Queer Cabaret program. In 2015, he was cast in the play, *All the Sex I Ever Had* at the Museum of Contemporary Arts and directed the *House Musical (Coming of Age in the Age of House Music)* in Chicago in 2023. He is working on his autobiography, entitled *The Happening*, reflecting on more than 50 years as a national performer and 30 years as a writer.

Eugene "Gene" Williams was the Mayor of Lynwood for 16 years. Gene is a past president of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) and served on several municipal committees and councils. In his retirement he has honed his natural talent for voice and music. He and his wife Darcelle have hosted a show together, singing songs of love, and have joined many other productions as well. In his not so spare time, he enjoys playing the piano and as he puts it, "learning new stuff". They have been married for 47 years and have three children.

Darcelle Williams received her BA in Theater Education from Illinois State University and a MA in Theater Directing. She taught Theatre, English and Speech, and directed theater productions at Percy Julian and Thornwood High Schools for over 20 years, including co-directing two State Championships for the Group Interpretations activity. More recently, she performed in *Ragtime*, as Motormouth Maybelle in *Hairspray* with the Drama Group in Chicago Heights, and other community theater productions. She directed a reading performance of *Death of the King's Horseman* and the musical *Sister Act* at the Drama Group. She can be seen on television in episodes of *The Chi* and *Blackboard Jungle*. She is a founding member of Griot Theatre Collective. Since the pandemic Darcelle rediscovered her love for music through Zoom groups and singing with her husband Eugene in several shows.

The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's mission is to honor and preserve Chicago's great literary heritage.



Our next event of September 24 is sold out, but livestream registration is open to honor Alex Kotlowitz's lifetime achievement at the Fuller Award Ceremony.

Learn more about the Literary Hall of Fame, its past inductees (including Edgar Lee Masters, of course) and its many educational programs, exhibits, and Chicago Literary Map and Tours.

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Poster by Chris Ware. Signed limited edition prints are available for \$250 by contacting Don Evans — dgevens@chicagoliteraryhof.org

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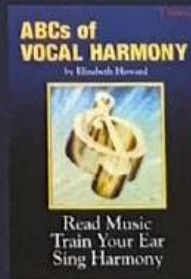
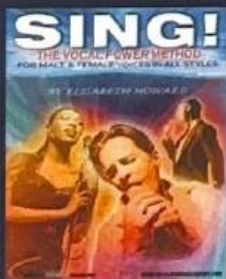
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SongShop welcomes singers each Tuesday evening at the DePaul School of Music for an ongoing workshop to hone our song interpretation and performance skills. Led by Claudia Hommel and music directed by Howie Pfeifer, SongShop Live concerts are an initiative of Working In Concert. Visit songshoplive.com.

SO MANY THANKS TO...

Jim Block and Ruth Fuerst

For opening their home and hearth:

Jonathan Lewis

As stage manager extraordinaire

Carrie Hedges and the Vista Homes Condo

Association for the loan of beautiful chairs

Juliana Engel and Peter Storms for videography and promotion

Christine Steyer for photography

Anastacio Gonzalez of the Lincoln Room

for recording assistance:

The participating artists who give more than they get

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Kenneth Gourlay, webmaster

Claudia Hommel, executive director

Cappy Kidd, Board secretary and fundraiser

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And THANK YOU to our audience

We invite you to stay connected via our email newsletters, to donate when you can, and to join us as fellow artists.

WORKINGINCONCERT.ORG

Chicago welcomes the 6th international exchange of
Chicago Paris Cabaret Connexion
 Monday, October 28- Monday, November 4
 plus a bonus concert November 9



Concert Festival
Cabaret Connexion 2024
cabaretconnexion.org/rsvp



Thurs
Oct 31

KURT WEILL CIRCUS by Anne Fromm (Lyon). Opening with WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF? Paulus the Cabaret Geek (London), a Paris trio, and hosted by Claudia Hommel (Chicago). Halloween costumes encouraged!

7:30 PM — DANKHaus, 4740 N Western Ave (Lincoln Sq)



Fri
Nov 1

OH LA LA ! Isabelle Georges, direct from Paris. Opening with Chicago diva Lynne Jordan and host Jeff Harnar (New York)

8 PM — Rhapsody Theater, 1323 W Morse (Rogers Park)



Sat
Nov 2

PIAF & PIAZZA ! Featuring Tássia Minuzzo (Brazil), Steve Normandin (Québec), Jeanie Carroll (Las Vegas), Michèle Barbier, Angélique Dessaint, Wilfried Touati (Paris)

6 PM — Alliance Française, 54 W Chicago (River North)



Sun
Nov 3

ON THE FUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET — a light-hearted showcase of Cabaret Connexion participants led by Angelina Réaux (San Diego)

3 PM — DePaul School of Music Recital Hall
 2380 N Halsted (Lincoln Park)



Mon
Nov 4

FROM PARIS AND CHICAGO WITH LOVE — Anne & Mark Burnell host an international cast to celebrate Old Town's twin neighborhood of Montmartre. You can can-can, too.

5:30 PM — Franklin Fine Arts Center
 225 W. Evergreen (Old Town)



Sat
Nov 9

TOUJOURS L'AMOUR—Jean-Claude Orfali offers piano inventions and variations on new and favorite French love songs, with guest vocalists Christine Steyer, Claudia Hommel, Angélique Dessaint

7:30 PM — PianoForte Chicago
 1335 S. Michigan Ave (South Loop)



Registration is now open for Master classes, workshops, round tables! Visit CABARETCONNEXION.ORG for schedules, session descriptions, personnel profiles and signups

