

REIMAGINING
CABARET
The Journey Continues



MARCH 22, 2025 | 7:00 PM



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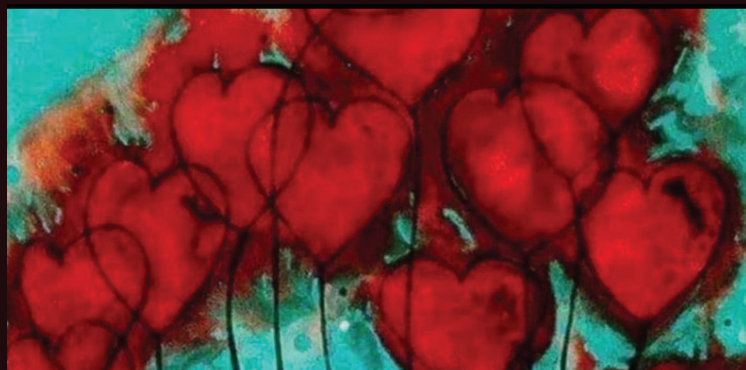
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***Reimagining Cabaret:
The Journey Continues
March 22, 2025 at 7 pm
at the Logan Center for the Arts***

CREATOR/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER Lynn Colbert-Jones
EMCEE/VOCALIST Margaret Murphy-Webb
MUSIC DIRECTOR/PIANIST Theodis Rodgers, Jr.
BASSIST Ivan Taylor
DRUMMER Linard Stroud, Jr.
PERCUSSION Clif Wallace

Welcome to Black Voices in Cabaret.

From swing to soul, from the opera house to Broadway, from jazz to blues, we're taking our third trip through the wide world of cabaret.

Today's songs will be performed by artists from the BVIC roster—

Making their BVIC debut:

Bobbi Wilsyn
Tammy McCann
Sheran Goodspeed
Keyton
Isiah Mitchell
Kenneth Fobs
Laura Stilwell
Sayveior
Malik Muhammad (viola)

Returning cast:

Margaret Murphy-Webb
Evelyn Danner
T. Patrick Davis
Sean Harris
Rae-Myra Hilliard
Randolph Johnson
Lynne Jordan
Ava Logan
Holly McGuire
Madeline Morgan
Sonia Oyola
Gabriel Valentino
Darcelle & Gene Williams

THANK YOU for all the support!

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& Allan Price, Jody Rapport, Swati Saxena, Clyde
Whitaker and our Double Good popcorn customers!

DIRECTOR'S NOTES — Lynn Colbert-Jones

As the creator, producer and director of *Reimagining Cabaret: The Journey Continues*, I am honored to bring this next chapter of our series to the stage. This production is more than a concert—it's a celebration of music's ability to connect us, an invitation to explore the genres that have shaped our culture, and a platform to showcase the incredible artistry of our performers.

From opera to jazz, blues to R&B, and beyond, we embrace the full spectrum of music's power to connect, uplift, and inspire. With each show, we deepen our commitment to reimagining cabaret as an inclusive, dynamic space where storytelling through song takes center stage.

This year, we welcome a phenomenal lineup of debuting and returning artists, each bringing their unique voice and passion to the stage. It is my greatest joy to select every song for every singer. This collaboration ensures that every artist shines their brightest. Together, we are creating an unforgettable evening of joy, reflection, and musical brilliance.

Thank you for joining us here at the Logan Center for the Arts as we continue this journey—one that honors tradition, embraces community, infuses love and celebrates the power of music to move us all.

SHARE the next show with Friends and Fans!

Join us during Chicago Cabaret Week:

May 10 at Freedom Hall: *Reimagining Cabaret: The Genres Explored* in Park Forest

May 17 at the Haven in Bronzeville.

July 13 at Epiphany Center for the Arts with *Black Voices & Friends!*

BVIC is an initiative of Working In Concert, a performing arts facilitator since 2019. We are proud to have Lynn Colbert-Jones on our board.

Learn more at blackvoicesincabaret.org.

To our audience, THANK YOU!

Stay connected via our email newsletters,
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workinginconcert.org/connect. Call 773-509-9360.

PROFILES

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 serving often as “Miraculous Wardrobe Mistress”. 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 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. Patrick has performed in Chicago Cabaret Professional’s Musical Mondays, Merry Measures, and Strut Your Stuff, with 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. 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. His solo blues jazz show is in the works.

KENNETH FOBS—Chicago native and winner of the Chicago Cabaret Professionals “2024 Emerging Artist Showcase”, Kenneth’s performance credits cover acting, singing, musical theatre, commercials, film and print in Chicago and New York including: the ETA Theatre, Theatre on the Lake, the Kathryn Dunham Theatre, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, the Billie Holiday Theatre, and the legendary Don’t Tell Mama’s. His commercial and print credits include top brands: Jet Magazine, Comcast, Sears, McDonalds and Seagrams. He is blessed to continue his passion in Black Voices in Cabaret productions. His “sold out” solo performance returns to the Epiphany Center for the Arts on June 8.

SEAN HARRIS—An extraordinary singer with a voice from lyric baritone to tenor and countertenor, Sean has a firm commitment to conveying his songs to each member of the audience. Sean has been deeply influenced by Mario Lanza for opera and Neapolitans, Johnny Mathis for pop, and his favorite jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald. His rich repertoire includes rhythm and blues, jazz, French cabaret, Neapolitans, opera and oratorio, art songs and Broadway. He was mentored by pianist/band leader Joe Vito who said: “His is an unbelievable voice; with smooth transitions between musical styles.” In demand from churches to senior centers, he is featured singing in French and English on the *Jazz Fauré Project* albums (jazzfaure.com). He can be reached at 773-744-6537.

RAE-MYRA HILLIARD regularly programs recitals featuring Black-American composers/lyricists, including her debut

CD, *Lifescapes: One Woman’s Journey*. 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. Her newest project is a lecture series entitled *Queens of Composition: Excellence in the music by Black-American Women*. She holds her Masters in Music 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. Her Christmas CD featuring classical and popular works is underway.

RANDOLPH JOHNSON, a native Chicagoan, has received acclaim 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*; and 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, the U of I Black Chorus, and Chicago Chamber Opera. He is a James Scholar, Masters in Music Education from University of Illinois.

LYNNE JORDAN—singer, storyteller whom Chicago film critic Roger Ebert declared as his “favorite diva.” Backed by her sizzling band The Shivers, Jordan is a Chicago institution, playing jazz and blues clubs, Bluesfest, swanky lounges and the charity circuit. She brings her special brand of storytelling, raw humor, and performance to her sold-out show, *A Musical Tribute to Nina Simone*. Raised in Dayton, Ohio, Lynne studied journalism at Northwestern University before changing majors, performing nonstop ever since. She represented Chicago as Arts Ambassador to Moscow and Kyiv, has graced stages throughout Europe and South America, and was featured in the Jazz Opera, *Don’t Worry, Be HaRpy* by French composer Isabelle Olivier, and exhilaratingly on tour with Corky Siegel. In addition to her own CDs, Lynne is featured on recordings by Tom Waits, Urge Overkill, Toronzo Cannon and several compilations, including *Blues Down Deep: Songs of Janis Joplin*.

SHERAN GOODSPEED KEYTON has toured nationally and internationally as actor and singer. Her vocal style ranges from a gospel bluesy belt to jazzy smooth neo-soul. Performance awards include Best Actress award by the Dallas-Fort Worth Theatre Critic’s Forum for her portrayal of *Bessie Smith: Empress of the Blues* at Jubilee Theatre and by the Fort Worth Black Chamber of Commerce Film Festival. In 2008, Sheran formed her own nonprofit theater company, DVA Productions, Inc., for educational outreach and mainstage shows and in 2010 formed Sheer Heaven Entertainment with a focus on film and television production. In 2011, Sheran was one of only 160 acts out of 100,000 to make it to the Hollywood Boot Camp of *The X Factor*. In addition to DVA Productions, Sheran has written, directed and/or produced educational and

outreach programming and original works for dozens of DFW schools, theaters and community organizations. She is Director of Civic Engagement at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

AVA LOGAN is an award-winning singer-actor from Washington, D.C. Veterinarian Dr. Logan by day, Ava is a classically-trained jazz recording artist and has performed jazz, pop, and R&B with duos to 18-piece big bands nationally and internationally. She has portrayed her idols Ella Fitzgerald and Nancy Wilson in professional theater performances in Chicago. Her CD, *So Many Stars*, produced by guitarist Henry Johnson, was met with critical acclaim. www.avalogan.com

TAMMY McCANN—Named the *Chicago Tribune's* 2020 Person of the Year in Jazz, Tammy is an internationally recognized jazz vocalist and serves as Artist in Residence for the Music Institute of Chicago. Her powerful and emotionally charged voice paints pictures and tells stories by merging classical vocal technique and gospel esthetic with jazz to create a sound that is completely her own. Mentored by Alyce Claerbaut, President of Strayhorn Songs Publishing, Inc. and acclaimed by *Inside Jazz Magazine* Music Critic, Nora McCarthy and Howard Reich of the *Chicago Tribune*, Tammy has performed with luminaries such as Ramsey Lewis, NEA Jazz Master Von Freeman, John Clayton, Branford Marsalis, Joe Locke, Charles McPherson, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Carmen Bradford; and toured as a 'Raelette' with Ray Charles. She has thrilled audiences from Bangkok to the Harrods Atticus in Greece, as well as Carnegie Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Birdland, The Blue Note, Dizzy's Club Coca Cola and Chicago's own Jazz Showcase.

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. With the Steve Sandner Quartet she toured many Midwestern resorts and clubs, and recorded 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. In addition to singing with Chicago Bar Association Choir, she has soloed for St. James Cathedral, Harold Washington Library, Lincoln Academy of Illinois Ceremony, Fourth Presbyterian Jazz service, and Unity Chicago (at Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase).

ISIAH MITCHELL—For nearly 40 years, Isiah Mitchell has been the powerhouse lead vocalist of Chicago's legendary Midnight Sun Band, captivating audiences with his dynamic range, soulful delivery, and electrifying stage presence. Isiah's journey began at just eight years old, earning recognition as "Little Michael Jackson" before evolving into a versatile artist inspired by the genius of Stevie Wonder and the uplifting spirit of Earth, Wind & Fire. His career has taken him across the world, sharing the stage with icons like Jean Carne, Roy Ayers, Otis Clay and others. With a repertoire spanning Blues, Gospel, R&B, Rock, and Reggae, Whether leading Midnight Sun or commanding the stage solo, Isiah Mitchell doesn't just sing—he brings music to life.

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. A member of Chicago Cabaret Professionals, she has performed at Davenport's Cabaret several times, and produced and directed projects *Ella and Sarah* with Judy Narcisse at Infinity and the Luncheon Jazz series.

MALIK MUHAMMAD (violinist)—At age 16, Malik is a high school senior at Muhammad University of Islam and recipient of the Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award. For the past three years, Malik has been a fellow with Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative (CMPI) and debuted his first composition "Softly Blue (Suddenly) Grey" with Civic Orchestra of Chicago's composition program. He was also accepted to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Young Composers Initiative (YCI), studying under Jessie Montgomery since 2022. Malik attends the Merit School of Music's Conservatory Program, is a member of their chamber orchestra, and has participated in the Interlochen Arts Camp and The Elisabeth Morrow School Summer String Festival. His chamber piece "Recoverless" will be featured in an upcoming documentary *What's Left Behind* about mothers who have lost their children to gun violence. In 2021, Malik and his father were winners of the Carle Illinois College of Medicine Health Make-a-Thon for their project proposal "Music to My Ears, A Balm from Bronzeville"—to use classical music as a balm for overburdened healthcare workers facing COVID-19 and chronic violence.

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. With Bob Solone as accompanist and collaborator, *Sonia and Bob Sing For You* 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. 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. 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 *Hot Jazz* can be found on all streaming platforms.

SAYVEIOR—Mesiyah, known as 'Sayveior,' is an entrepreneur and musician from Chicago. With a church choir background and strong business acumen, he blends soulful melodies with R&B beats, inspiring audiences through his voice and entrepreneurship.

LAURA STILWELL, jazz vocalist, captivates audiences with her vibrant energy and soulful storytelling. Her commanding stage presence in dance is equally matched by a powerful authenticity and love for singing. Laura performs and records with Tommy James, former musical director, arranger and pianist with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Laura has performed in notable jazz clubs including Cleopatra's Needle, St. Mark's Church in the Bowery in NYC; Wilf's Restaurant, Arrivederci, The Underground, JoBar in Portland; The Bottom Line in Japan; The Nidaba Theatre in Milan and Zona Franca in Sao Paolo. She has been featured in tributes to Motown with stars from The Platters, The Coasters and The Drifters. Laura conducts jazz vocal workshops, serves as director/choreographer, and also teaches ballet and jazz dance at Bodyvox Dance Center www.bodyvox.org. laurastilwelljazz.com & laurastilwelldance.com.

LINARD STROUD, JR. began playing drums at the age of three, alongside his father at Chicago's legendary Lakefront Drum Circle. Since then, he has performed and recorded with notable artists including Lionel Hampton, CeCe Winans, Jennifer Holliday, Rickey Dillard, Buddy Guy, Syl Johnson, and Steve Arrington.

IVAN TAYLOR—a native of Southern Illinois, Ivan has been playing the bass since age nine, notably during high school with the Illinois All-State Jazz band, The Grammy Band, and Chicago Jazz masters Von Freeman and Orbert Davis. A star performance at the 2002 Essentially Ellington competition led him to Wynton Marsalis and the Juilliard School of Music. On the New York scene, he performed with dozens of greats from Rashid Ali, Louis Hayes, Nicholas Payton, Curtis Fuller, Mike Philips, Kenny Garrett, Delfeayo Marsalis, Wynton Marsalis, to Take 6, Diana Ross, Chris Madsen, Jennifer Sloan, Tia Fuller, Shamie Royston and many others. He studied with Ben Wolfe and continues with Ron Carter. Since 2005 he has been a member of Mulgrew Miller's trio and Wingspan sextet touring internationally. He plays upright and electric bass with equal agility, and guitar to feature on future albums.

GABRIEL VALENTINO emanates music, singing and composing R&B, hip hop, house, salsa, soul, gospel, reggae, reggaeton, folk, jazz, country, and pop. Born in Chicagoland by way of Panamá, Gabriel has performed as a singer, songwriter, dancer, and actor throughout Chicago. He sang with the Chicago Cabaret Professionals in *Broadway Soul* at the Black Ensemble Theater. He has performed his original music at Navy Pier, the Promontory, Le Piano, Davenport's Piano Bar & Cabaret, among other venues. He also performs with Chicago Community Choir, a contemporary gospel choir originating from the historic First Baptist Congregational Church of Chicago. An individual of

multiple talents, Gabriel supports and promotes his soulful vibes via his social media presence: "Umami Memories: Savoring, Story, Song, & Soul."

CLIF WALLACE, percussion—From his birthplace in Indiana to locations across the Midwest, South, and East Coast, Clif Wallace has called a number of places home. Now a resident of Chicago, he has become one of the city's most in-demand drummers. Known for his versatility, Wallace performs in many genres, with Victor Goines, Tammy McCann, Bobby Broom, Pharez Whitted, The Chicago Jazz Orchestra, Rodney Whitaker, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Diego Rivera, Robert Irving III, Marquis Hill, Dan Trudell, John Brown, Orbert Davis, and others. In his latest trio project pairs original compositions with hip arrangements of music representing nostalgic events from his personal life. As band leader and producer, he also leads his own quintet and the Clif Wallace Big Band with some of Chicago's best in music performance of any texture.

EUGENE "GENE" WILLIAMS was the Mayor of Lynwood for 16 years, 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, co-directing two State Championships for the Group Interpretations activity. More recently, she performed in *Ragtime*, as Motormouth Maybelle in *Hairspray*. 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.

BOBBI WILSYN—Recipient of the 2018 Black Excellence Award for Outstanding Achievement in Jazz, and 2015 Outstanding Jazz Educator, Bobbi Wilsyn is singer, actor, voice-over/jingle performer, and recording artist. Milt Trenier discovered Bobbi in Los Angeles and toured with her from Las Vegas to Atlantic City. In late 70s, she planted stakes in Chicago, singing with her combo the jazz, blues, pop, and gospel repertoire that inspired her as a child. She was featured jazz-blues vocalist with the Chicago Jazz Ensemble under the direction of William Russo and Jon Faddis, Orbert Davis' Chicago Jazz Philharmonic and Jeff Lindberg's Chicago Jazz Orchestra. She toured with the international Italian Jazz Band and Dick Dunscomb's Symphonic Jazz International. Musical theater performances include *Keegle Street*, *Beehive*, *It Ain't Nothin' but the Blues* and *Sophisticated Ladies*. Retired in 2020 as Professor Emerita at Columbia College (Coordinator of Voice Studies), she continues as private voice and life coach, workshop facilitator, singer/actor and motivational speaker.

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- Black Voices in Cabaret
- Chicago Paris Cabaret Connexion
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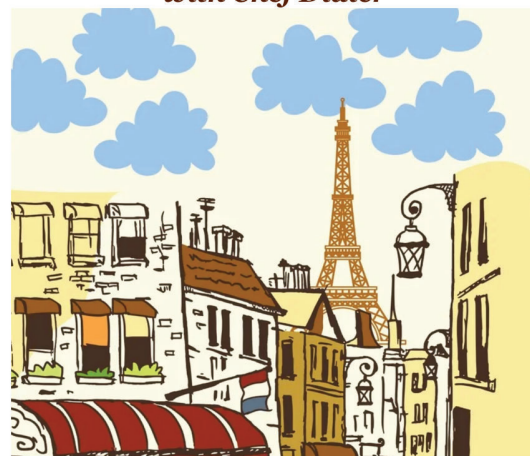
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CHICAGO



Cabaret Week

May 9-18, 2025



More than 95 performers performing in 17 venues throughout Chicagoland includes our BVIC associates:

May 9— Opening Night: Robin Watson at Epiphany Center for the Arts

May 10—*Celebrate Aging Well* at Fourth Presbyterian Church

May 10—Black Voices in Cabaret at Freedom Hall (Park Forest)

May 12—Chicago Cabaret Professionals' "Cities of the World" at Rhapsody Theater

May 13—Claudia Hommel & Co. offer Paris with Love at Rockwell on the River

May 15—Sarah Siddons Swell Soirée at PianoForte

May 15—Lynne Jordan & the Shivers at the Cliff Dwellers Club

May 16—Joan Collaso & Friends at the Haven in Bronzeville

May 17—Black Voices in Cabaret at the Haven

Visit chicagocabaretweek.org for the full lineup and details.

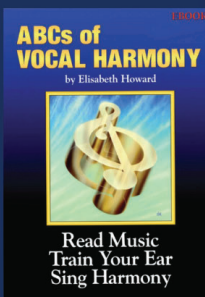
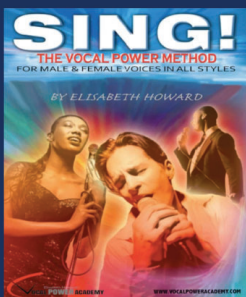
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