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# ORFEO ED EURIDICE

THURSDAY, JUNE 13 & FRIDAY, JUNE 14 | 7:30 PM  
at the Dante Alighieri Society of Massachusetts







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to recognizing the good  
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**NEMPAC**

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# ABOUT NEMPAC



**NEMPAC is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization** founded in 2001 by a group of five local mothers who were seeking arts enrichment programming for their children. NEMPAC has become an important resource for the North End, Charlestown, and beyond. In 2021, during its 20th anniversary year, NEMPAC expanded into new facilities at 50 Tileston Street to serve hundreds more community members. As a music school, NEMPAC reaches over 1,550 students per week through private lessons, group classes, and Boston Public and private school partnerships, offering programs across several art disciplines including music, dance, and theatre. As a highly-respected performing arts center, NEMPAC presents public concerts and professional performance projects, involving hundreds of local Boston artists in the Winter Concert Series, the NEMPAC Opera Project, and more. Many of these programs are free to the public, including Jazz in the Park, Opera from the Balcony, the North End Library Concert Series, and our Messiah Concert with Boston Landmarks Orchestra.



# ABOUT NEMPAC



## **NEMPAC's MISSION**

Rooted in the North End, our mission is to enrich lives through accessible, exceptional music education and performing arts programs that embrace our vibrant, inclusive, and diverse communities.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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# SYNOPSIS



## ACT 1, SCENE 1 - CLUB ORFEO'S

It's Orfeo and Euridice's wedding day, when an unexpected tragedy occurs. Euridice dies, and Orfeo and her close friends mourn her death and process their grief.

## ACT 1, SCENE 2 - CLUB ORFEO'S

Amore hears Orfeo's grief and offers a deal with the gods to rescue Euridice from the underworld. The only catch: she can't look back at Euridice until they reach the world of the living once again.

## ACT 2, SCENE 1 - GATES OF HELL

Orfeo bravely traverses to the gates of hell to start her journey to rescue Euridice from death. The Furies are a formidable force, and Orfeo uses her gift of music to soften their hearts.

## *INTERMISSION*

## ACT 2, SCENE 2 - CLUB ELYSIUM IN THE UNDERWORLD

Orfeo finds herself in a 1920s speakeasy where time stands still, and the spirits revel in sweet and peaceful rest.

## ACT 3, SCENE 1 - THE UNDERWORLD

Orfeo finds Euridice with the help of the Elysium spirits, but she cannot show her face or her wife will be gone forever. Amore intervenes once more, and the rainbow angels of healing surround Orfeo and Euridice for their final goodbye.

## ACT 3, SCENE 2 - CLUB ORFEO'S

Orfeo returns from her epic journey, finding great hope and joy in her community and the memory of her beloved Euridice.



# NIGHTINGALE VOCAL ENSEMBLE

## CREATIVE TEAM

Brenda Huggins.....	Stage Director
Alyssa Wang.....	Conductor
Sepehr Davallou.....	Assistant Music Director & Pianist
Leo Balkovetz.....	Artistic Associate & Supertitle Translator/Operator
Nancy Ishihara.....	Costume Designer
Kate Doucette.....	Costume/Wardrobe Assistant & Hair & MakeUp Designer
Amber Kovacs.....	Lighting Designer
Pat Meaden.....	Lighting Assistant
Lauren Cook.....	Intimacy Coordinator
Kristen Seibert.....	Followspot Operator
Kit Lacolla.....	Props Lead and Production Assistant



# BOSTON FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA



Alyssa Wang.....	Conductor
Kurt Munstedt.....	Violin 1
Kay Rooney .....	Violin 2
Noriko Futagami.....	Viola
Aron Zelkowicz.....	Cello
Bebo Shiu .....	Bass
Allison Parramore.....	Flute
Catherine Weinfield-Zel.....	Oboe & English Horn
Sepehr Davallou.....	Keyboard
Amanda Romano.....	Harp

## ABOUT BOSTON FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA



The Boston Festival Orchestra is a nonprofit with a focus on the accessibility and impact of classical music. The BFO brings the highest caliber of artistic service to Greater Boston by offering accessible, educational, and relevant music experiences, employing local professional musicians, and engaging with its community through an extensive nonprofit partnership program.



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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In collaboration with the Boston Festival Orchestra, we wanted to choose a piece with timeless and culturally resonant themes where our artists and audiences can see themselves in the stories. With our Italian Cultural partner, the Dante Alighieri Society of Massachusetts, selecting a piece in Italian language was a goal, even though this work contrasted stylistically with previous repertoire in our 12-year production history. As an opera from the late Baroque period, this is the earliest piece we have produced, but the mythological origins of the story allow us to easily update the production, similar to the way *Hadestown* modernizes these iconic characters and stories for contemporary audiences.

Our production centers on community and healing instead of focusing only on the aspects of loss and grief in the story. By rejoicing ALL LOVE in our first ever Pride Month celebration, *Orfeo ed Euridice* inspires the LOVE IS LOVE theme for our season, in a modern take on this enduring classic that transcends gender. Typically performed by a femme-identifying mezzo-soprano in drag as a "pants role", our Orfeo is instead a woman who loses the love of her life on her wedding day. In this intimate, wildly fun, and whimsical take, we set the scene in a 90s gay club, journeying to the underworld with Orfeo as she processes her grief of the loss of her wife, Euridice. Remembering that gay marriage was not legalized in Massachusetts until 2004, we explore the story of these lovers from the Queer community in that place where self-expression and sexuality are unencumbered by politics or other oppressive ideologies: the gay club. Orfeo, a brilliant musician, shows us the power of music and community to heal and help us overcome our deepest heartaches. Love is love, until they can be together again.

What inspires us most about Pride as a social justice movement is the celebration of joy, love, community, and the importance of visibility. Queer artists and allies take the center of our production on stage and behind the scenes. Especially in the 90s, the club constitutes the vital social scene for Queer folks to express their authentic identity... to be seen, loved, and healed.

# SPECIAL THANKS

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Thank you to Club Café, High Output, Mario Zanca, Friends of the North End Boston Public Library, Brookline Porch Fest, Boston Pride for the People, NEMPAC Board of Directors, Rich Vita, & Dante Alighieri Society of Massachusetts.





# JAZZ IN THE PARK

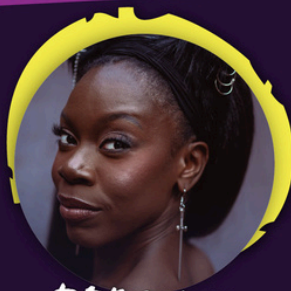
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AUGUST 1



CAIO E JESS  
AUGUST 8



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# PRINCIPAL CAST



**Mary Kray (Orfeo)** (she/her) is a mezzo-soprano and voice teacher based in Boston, MA, with a performance background spanning opera, oratorio, musical theater, neo-soul, and pop. Notably, Mary has performed as Marcellina in NEMPAC's production of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and in the chorus of Boston Lyric Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*. She has performed as the alto soloist in Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Beethoven's 9th Symphony, and Handel's *Messiah*. Mary covered the role of Mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at Church on the Hill, and she eagerly anticipates covering Carmen with Boston Opera Collaborative in their upcoming production of *La Tragédie de Carmen*. Alongside her private teaching studio, Mary has taught music and voice at Arlington Children's Theater, Boston Conservatory's Vocal Choral Intensive, and Beverly Music Academy.



California native **Madeleine Lew (Euridice)** (she/her) is a young soprano in her second season at the BU Opera Institute, where this season she portrayed La Fée in Massenet's *Cendrillon*, Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, and Quinn in Melissa Dunphy's new opera *Alice Tierney*. Madeleine received her Masters at the University of Southern California and is a recent graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Madeleine made her European debut in Helsinki, Finland in March 2022, creating the leading role of the Bear in Uljas Pulkiss's world premiere of *All the Truths We Cannot See*. Madeleine is a winner of the prolific 2023 Frank Huntington Beebe Fund grant, the 2023 Boston District of the Laffont Metropolitan Opera Competition, 2019 East Bay Opera League Competition, and 2019 Bell Encouragement Award winner of the James Toland Vocal Arts competition.



# PRINCIPAL CAST



**Abbey Diana Engelmann (Amore)** is an operatic soprano and graduate student at Longy School of Music of Bard College under the tutelage of Dr. Corrine Byrne. Engelmann holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and certificate in dance from Millikin University. She is extremely excited to be performing Amore in NEMPAC's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. This season she will additionally be performing The Water in Portman's *The Little Prince* (Longy), Second Lady in *Die Zauberflöte*, Dew Fairy in *Hänsel und Gretel* (MOS) and making her Lincoln Center debut. Her recent credits include Flora in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* (CSO)—which received Broadway World Chicago 2023 Best Production of an Opera Award—Nella in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Despina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (Millikin).



**Rebekah Daly (Orfeo cover)** is a mezzo-soprano originally from the greater Boston area. Daly is currently a fellow at Boston University's Opera Institute, where she performed Zandra in *Alice Tierney*, and Madame de La Haltière in *Cendrillon*. Last season, Daly was an apprentice artist at Santa Fe Opera and performed outreach with 'Opera for the Young' in a touring production of *The Barber of Seville*. Daly holds a Master of Music degree from Northwestern University and completed her undergraduate training at Rutgers University in New Jersey. At Northwestern, Daly sang Baba (*The Medium*), and Proserpina (*L'Orfeo*). Other role highlights include Third Wood Sprite (*Rusalka*), Zita (*Gianni Schicchi*), Mrs. Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*), and Mere Marie (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*).



# PRINCIPAL CAST



**Dasom (Julia) Kim (Euridice cover)** obtained her Bachelor's degree from Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul, South Korea. She studied under Professor Yunja Kim, Kiyong Yang, and Sunghee Park. After graduating from university, she played an important role in her church choir, performed throughout the religious music field, and also performed as a soloist in oratorio and opera. With her desire to become a fully-fledged opera singer and gain deeper understanding of music and education methods, she decided to further her studies abroad. Currently, she is pursuing a Master's degree at the Longy School of Music of Bard College in Boston, as of fall 2023.



**Sydney Pérez (Amore cover)** is thrilled to be performing Princess Ida with the Sudbury Savoyards. She is pursuing a Master's in Vocal Performance at the Longy School of Music. An avid performer, her highlighted operatic roles include the title role in *Princess Ida*, Gertrud in *Hansel und Gretel*, El Duende in *Maria de Buenos Aires*, Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*, and Aline in *The Sorcerer*, with covers of Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Diana in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. Sydney has premiered four roles in new compositions, including Alma Menckenberg in *The Audition Fever*, COMPUTER in *XOR*, and the title role in *Lori: A Micro-Opera for our Stolen Sisters*, a new opera of which she is the librettist.





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# NIGHTINGALE VOCAL ENSEMBLE

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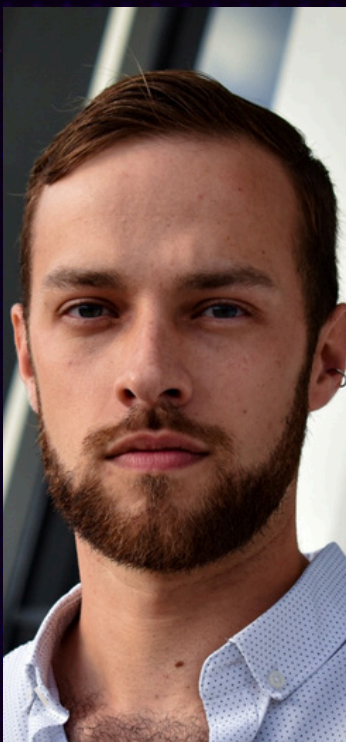
Indian-American tenor **Kartik Ayyola** is a frequent performer in the Greater Boston area as well as throughout New England. This season, he has appeared with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra in their production of *Norma* and has sung the role of Spoletta in Opera Vermont's production of *Tosca*. In addition, he is a seasoned concert performer, appearing as the tenor soloist in such works as *Messiah* by Handel, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and many more. Originally a native of Dover, PA, Kartik earned the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, studying under Dr. Joseph Baunoch, and then went on to earn the Master of Music degree, studying under Dr. Jerrold Pope. He is currently the student of Bradley Williams.



**Darby Clinard** is an aspiring mezzo-soprano from Waterford, Virginia who is based in the New England region. Darby performs with many organizations in the Boston area, joining the ensemble of Odyssey Opera, as well as Boston Lyric Opera. You can see her with Boston Opera Collaborative, Nightingale Ensemble, and Cantata Singers. She is currently on faculty teaching voice and piano at the Shady Hill School in Cambridge, MA since fall of 2023. She recently graduated from New England Conservatory of Music where she received her Graduate Diploma in Vocal Performance. Additionally, she completed her Masters of Music in Vocal Performance from New England Conservatory of Music last May.



# NIGHTINGALE VOCAL ENSEMBLE



Baritone **Nicholas Fahrenkrug** has been sought after throughout the Northeast region for his powerful sound in concert and expressive story-telling on stage. A versatile performer, Nicholas thrives on singing diverse repertoire in opera, chamber, and new music. This season he has appeared with the Boston Holiday Pops, Boston Opera Collaborative, the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Nightingale Vocal Ensemble. Notable roles include Hawkins Fuller (*Fellow Travelers*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Giulio Cesare (*Giulio Cesare*), Conte Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Raimbaud (*Le comte Ory*), and John Buchanan (*Summer and Smoke*). Nicholas is a proud alum of Louisiana State University (MM) and Lawrence Conservatory of Music (BM). Learn more about his recent and future engagements at [nickfahrenkrug.com](http://nickfahrenkrug.com)



Tenor, **Michael González** praised as "visually and sonically stunning" and revered for his "beautiful tenor voice" being the "aural equivalent of silk" ... "González has a bright, forward tone and enunciates well" (BMI). González has been quickly emerging on the scene in everything from Opera, Solo, and Choral performance. In González's solo career he has recently performed at the National Opera Center in New York, in an opera recital series. New York Reviewers calling Michael "one of the evening's best" and as an emerging artist "predicting he will go far" (New York Concert Review).



# NIGHTINGALE VOCAL ENSEMBLE

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Baritone **Juan Suarez** has most recently performed with Opera del West, NEMPAC Opera Project and the Boston Festival Orchestra, and has also performed in other engagements with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras, Odyssey Opera, and MassOpera. His last collaboration with NEMPAC Opera Project was as Il Conte in their 2023 production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Other notable engagements include singing in the chorus on Boston Modern Opera Project's Grammy nominated recording of *The Lord of Cries*, an opera by composer John Corigliano and librettist Mark Adamo. Juan holds Music Degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music and Stetson University.

# CREATURE HOUSE

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A big thank you to the artists from the **Creature House**, a collective of local Queer artists featuring works exploring the theme of community and healing. Artwork from these fearless creators will be on display in the lobby of the Dante Alighieri Society for audience members to view both before the performance and during the intermission. The featured artists include:

- Adam Ilczyn
- Ben
- Bithiah Holton
- Braedon Baston



# CREATIVE TEAM



**Brenda L. Huggins (Stage Director)** is a Boston-based theater director, dramaturg, and puppetry artist with a deep interest in new work development, public art, and creating intimate and culturally resonant productions of classical opera. As the resident stage director with Opera del West in the Boston area from 2014-2017, Brenda created inspired productions of classical and contemporary opera works including *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret* (2019), *Le Portrait de Manon* (2017), *Signor Deluso* (2017), *Don Pasquale* (2016), *Le nozze di Figaro* (2015), and *The Seagull* (2014). Recent projects include Creative and Stage Direction of a new version of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* (2023) with Opera del West, Dramaturgy and Assistant Director with White Snake Project's *Monkey: A Kung Fu Puppet Parable* (2023), *Mr. Twister and the Tale of Tornado Alley*, a touring opera and puppetry public art work in partnership with local Climate Activists (2022-23), NEMPAC Opera Project's *Le nozze di Figaro* (2023), Guerilla Opera's Emergence Composer Fellowship (2020), and CantantiProject's *Teseo: Medea* (NYC, 2019). As a member of AGMA, she has assistant directed with the Boston Lyric Opera (2023.) Brenda holds an M.F.A in Theatre Education and Applied Theatre from Emerson College, served as the Learning and Leadership Manager of OPERA America from 2017-2019, and is currently the Director of Performing Arts at the Colleges of the Fenway, Boston MA. [www.brendalynhuggins.com](http://www.brendalynhuggins.com)



# CREATIVE TEAM

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**Alyssa Wang (conductor)** is a passionate and versatile conductor, violinist, and composer. A recipient of the 2023 Solti Foundation Career Assistance Award and the 2022 St. Botolph Emerging Artist Award, Alyssa has enjoyed exploring diverse creative paths across several areas, with a focus on audience inclusivity and engagement. She is the Co-Founder, Artistic Director, and Principal Conductor of the Boston Festival Orchestra, which presents an annual summer festival, chamber music series, and opera project. In 2021, she joined the Boston Ballet as Assistant Conductor, conducting full ballet productions throughout the year and serving as Music Director for the annual Next Generation project with Boston Ballet School. As a violinist, Alyssa is a member musician of the Boston Chamber Music Society and has soloed with ensembles across the country. She has been featured in numerous contemporary recording projects, such as Carlos Simon's Grammy-nominated album, *Requiem for the Enslaved* (Decca), Nancy Galbraith's Violin Concerto with Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and David Post's Violin Sonata (Centaur). As a composer, she premiered her own violin concerto, *Swept Away*, with the Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh, who commissioned the work, in February 2023, and looks forward to future composition projects.



# CREATIVE TEAM



**Charlie Berry (Stage Manager)** is excited to return to NEMPAC for the opera project after stage managing *Le nozze di Figaro* last year! Additional credits include: Company One: *Morning, Noon, and Night* (Stage Manager). MassOpera: *Caravana de mujeres* New Opera Workshop (Stage Manager). Lyric Stage: *The Game's Afoot* (Rehearsal ASM), *Sister Act* (Deck Crew), *The Light* (ASM). Huntington Theatre Company: *The Band's Visit* & *Prayer for the French Republic* (Deck Crew/Automation). Commonwealth Shakespeare Company: *Macbeth* (ASM). Education: BFA Stage & Production Management. Special thanks to all their friends' cats that decorate their black clothing with fur for every show!



**Leo Balkovetz (Artistic Associate and Supertitle Translator/Operator)** is a tenor, performer and librettist in the Boston area. He has performed in the world premieres of *Reap What You Soul* (Guy) with Promenade Opera Project and *NIGHTTOWN* (Buck Mulligan) with Lowell House Opera, and a touring production of *Mr. Twister* (Bobby), an opera for children. In 2024, you can also see him on stage in *L'Amico Fritz* (Federico) with West Lyric Opera and *I Pagliacci* (Peppe) with Opera51. Off stage, Leo penned the libretto for Quinn Gutman's *Violetta* a Queer re-telling of Verdi's *La Traviata*, and a modern treatment of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* for Opera del West's 2023 season and as NEMPAC's 2024 Artistic Associate and supertitlist for *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Find out more at [www.leobalkovetz.com](http://www.leobalkovetz.com)



# CREATIVE TEAM



A Boston-based artist, **Sepehr Davallou (Assistant Music Director & Pianist)** is a pianist, vocal coach and opera répétiteur with a passion for text and poetry. He has just graduated from New England Conservatory with a diploma in opera coaching. He holds a master's degree in Collaborative Piano from University of Maryland and has served as a fellow at Aspen Music Festival. He has studied with renowned artists such as Cameron Stowe, Martin Katz, JJ Penna and Tanya Blaich. Sepehr has served as rehearsal pianist for NEC's productions of *Die Fledermaus* and *Die Zauberflöte* and Miami Music Festival's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. At NEC, he has coached and performed in scenes programs and has performed in *Liederabend* Series, spanning a wide range of repertoire from German and French to Spanish and Folksong.

**Amber Kovacs (Lighting Designer)** is the Resident Lighting Designer at Emmanuel College, Network Engineer at Wentworth Institute of Technology, and a lighting assistant and designer with Foxy Lighting in the Greater Boston area. Her imaginative work spans events, theater, dance, and now opera! With a strong entrepreneurial spirit and technical theater skills; she also works as an independent freelance lighting designer and technical director; managing theater tech equipment repairs, rentals, and sales. <https://amberkovacs.com/>





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