



# MOONLIT CABARET

November 23, 2024 | 7:30pm

*The Ideal Theater & Bar*



CEDAR RAPIDS **OPERA**

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SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE

**DONATE**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF**

# PERFORMANCE ORDER

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**Karla Goettel, Evelyn Rush,  
Randall Walton, and Thaddeus Ennen**

“Tonight” from *West Side Story*..... by Leonard Bernstein

**Joshua Morey**

“Fly Me To the Moon” ..... by Bart Howard

**Paula Grady**

“When I Look at You” ..... by Frank Wildhorn  
from *The Scarlet Pimpernel*

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**Thaddeus Ennen**

“O! du mein holder Abendstern” ..... by Richard Wagner  
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**Justeen Schoner**

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**Randall Walton**

“I Am Adolpho” ..... by Lisa Lambert  
from *The Drowsy Chaperone* and Greg Morrison

**Karla Goettel**

“The River Songs” ..... Arranged by Dave Grusin  
and Steve Shanley

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from *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*

## **David Medin**

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from *Oklahoma* and Oscar Hammerstein

## **Leah Podzimek**

“Ain’t it a Pretty Night” .....by Carlisle Floyd  
from *Susannah*

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## **Joley Seitz**

“Clair de lune” .....by Joseph Szulc

## **Jaime Webb**

“Regnava nel Silenzio” .....by Gaetano Donizetti  
from *Lucia di Lammermoor*

## **Stephanie Goff**

“No One Else” .....by Dave Malloy  
from *Nathasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*

## **Thaddeus Ennen and Mary Jane Knight**

“Somewhere Out There” .....by James Horner, Barry Mann,  
from *An American Tale* ..... and Cynthia Weil

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**Pianists: Mary Jane Knight and Daniel Kleinknecht**

**Cellist: Lucy Conroy**

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# Joshua Morey

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Josh Morey graduated with top honors from Iowa Wesleyan University in 2018 and has since been involved in numerous ensembles such as the Kirkwood

Community Band, Cedar Rapids Municipal Band, Chorale Midwest, and Twenty-First Century Vocals. He started singing with Cedar Rapids Opera in the chorus of the 2024 production of *Tosca*. He also started singing with Opera Quad Cities last season at their *Messiah* Sing-In charity concert and the chorus of *La bohème*.





# Paula Grady

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Paula Grady performed in *Madama Butterfly* as Kate Pinkerton, CR Opera; Sondheim's *Follies* as Solange, ICCT; *Blood Brothers* as Mrs. Johnstone, Riverside Theatre; *Master Class* as Maria Callas, City Circle; *Tommy* as The Gypsy, TCR; *A Christmas Carol* as Belle, Old Creamery; and *Macbeth* as Lady Macbeth, MoonGarden. She has also sung with The Eddie Piccard Trio, The Dick Watson Trio and CR Jazz Big Band. Paula studied acting at the University of Iowa and American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. She enjoys tango with her partner, Dwight, and spending time with him and her feline furbabies, Liam and Keenan.



# Isabella Koch

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Isabella Koch, soprano, holds a bachelor's degree in Music Performance and K-12 Music Education from Mount Mercy University. She previously studied as a young artist at the Bel Canto Institute in Florence, Italy, with Maestro Jane Klaviter, Joshua Greene, and Eva Hess Thaysen. Past performances include: Edith Cover (*Pirates of Penzance*), Chorus (*Così fan Tutti*), and Chorus (*Tosca*). She currently teaches General and Choral Music at LaSalle Catholic Middle School. Isabella will next be seen in the chorus of the Cedar Rapids Opera's production of *Cinderella*.





# Evelyn Rush

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Evelyn Rush (she/her) holds a Master of Music in voice performance from the Conservatory of Music at University of Missouri-Kansas City and a Bachelor

of Music in voice performance from Simpson College. She has enjoyed performing with Concert Operetta Theatre and Center City Opera in Philadelphia, Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh, Cedar Rapids Opera, Hubbard Hall Opera in New York, and at her alma maters. She currently works for Orchestra Iowa and maintains a private voice studio. Future performances include the Holiday Cabaret with Crooked Path Theatre in Iowa City.



# Thaddeus Ennen

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Thaddeus Ennen, baritone and General Director of Cedar Rapids Opera, holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Louisiana State University, a Master of

Music degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and a Bachelor of Music degree from Simpson College.

He has performed on stages across the country, including Santa Fe Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Central City Opera, Pensacola Opera, Knoxville Opera, Fayetteville Opera, Opéra Louisiane, and many others. Notably,

Thaddeus was a soloist on the Grammy Award-winning Best Opera Performance of *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* by

Mason Bates and Mark Campbell. His recent roles include Germont in *La traviata*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*,

Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, and the title role in *Gianni Schicchi*. Beyond opera, Thaddeus maintains a busy concert

and recital schedule, while also running a vibrant vocal studio in Cedar Rapids.



# Justeen Schoner

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Justeen Schoner is a native of Marion, Iowa. They hold degrees in Liberal Arts, Musical Theatre, and Veterinary Technology from Kirkwood

Community College and Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa. They were recently in their first Sondheim show, *Into the Woods* at Kirkwood Community College. Other roles of note include Clarisse in *The Lightning Thief* at Giving Tree Theatre, & Matron “Mama” Morton in Kirkwood’s 2023 production of *Chicago*. Past performances with Cedar Rapids Opera include the community chorus of both *Don Giovanni* and *Cavalleria Rusticana y Pagliacci*. Upcoming engagements include the community chorus of *Cinderella* with CRO.



# Randall Walton

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Randy Walton is a Certified Celebrant at Cedar Memorial Funeral Home and the Director of Music at Noelridge Christian Church. As a Certified Celebrant at Cedar Memorial, Randy plays a crucial role in understanding and delivering the significance of personalized funeral services that honor the life and legacy of the deceased. He firmly believes that funerals are not just a formality but a vital part of the healing process, providing unwavering support to families. By helping families celebrate the unique qualities of their loved ones, Randy brings comfort to grieving people.

Randy's twenty-year tenure as the visual merchandiser at VonMaur Department Store in The Lindale Mall was marked by his ability to create visually appealing displays that not only attracted customers but also significantly increased sales. His expertise in designing, styling, and arranging products was recognized, and he was known for his innovative and creative ideas.

Randy is an experienced and talented musician who has dedicated his life to the art of music. He currently holds the position of Music Director at Noelridge Christian Church, where he has served for several years. In addition to his work at the church, Randy has been actively involved in the local theater scene, lending his musical skills to various productions at Theater Cedar Rapids, Cedar Rapids Opera, and Revival Theater Company. Randy's passion for music has led him to perform at numerous events throughout his career, including hundreds of weddings and funerals. His beautiful voice and exceptional musical ability have made him a go-to choice for those looking to add a touch of elegance and emotion to their special occasions. Randy's commitment to his craft is evident in every performance he gives, and he is widely respected for his dedication and talent.

Randy and his husband, Leonardo, lead a life of adventure, love, and meaningful connections. They are passionate about exploring the world, enjoying music, and spending time outside. Above all, they value their family and the relationships they have built over the years. Their devotion to creating memories together inspires their friends and family.



# Karla Goettel

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Karla Goettel's soprano voice serves her in a career of extraordinary range. She has performed with the Omaha, Mankato, Dubuque, Waterloo/Cedar Falls, Clinton, Wartburg, and Northwest Iowa Symphonies as well as the Cedar Rapids Concert Chorale (four times) and the

Waterloo Metropolitan Chorale in repertoire ranging from Bach, Mozart, and Haydn to Gershwin, Cole Porter and Andrew Lloyd-Webber. She has performed many times with the Cedar Rapids Symphony/Orchestra Iowa in their Classical, Chamber and Pops series, including a Holidays Pops concert that was broadcast on Iowa Public Television. Karla was the soprano soloist with Orchestra Iowa for *Beethoven's 9th Symphony* at BruceMorechestra, and she held a 12-week contract with Old Creamery Theatre (an Equity company) where she performed 42 performances of the musical *Tintypes*. She has been a frequent guest with Liar's Theatre of Marion, Iowa where she starred in *Ice*, *The Opera* and Sondheim's *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow*. Many of these performances have been broadcast on radio and television. As Maria in *The Sound of Music* she performed for over 10,000 people in sold-out performances. Karla has sung two principal roles with the Cedar Rapids Opera, The Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and Adele in *Die Fledermaus*.

Her solo recitals have taken her across the United States, including Boulder and Denver, Colorado, Ft. Smith, Arkansas (twice), a four-city tour through Ohio, Norfolk, Virginia, Wheeling, West Virginia, and a four-city concert tour on the east coast of Florida, which culminated in a performance at the famed Flagler Museum in Palm Beach with Maestro Paul Csonka, conductor of the Palm Beach Opera, at the piano. She was selected by the Iowa Arts Council to perform a half-hour concert for the National Governors Gala at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines in 2005.

Karla has coached with Metropolitan conductors Richard Weitach and Jeffrey Tate, Richard Boldrey of the Chicago Lyric Opera and Robert Larsen from the Des Moines Metro Opera. Her honors include selection as one of thirteen finalists in the National Opera Association Auditions held in Dallas, Texas and a career development grant from the Young Artist Development Fund in Cleveland, Ohio. She has twice been named an Outstanding Young Woman of America.

Karla has toured extensively for the Iowa Arts Council, performing and teaching in over 65 Iowa communities. Her CD, *Just Great Songs*, produced in part with a Grant from the IAC and the National Endowment for the Arts, received rave reviews.

In addition to a performance career, Karla has a private voice studio. Her students have been consistent winners in competitions at the state, regional, and national level and are performing on Broadway and in opera all over the world, as well as teaching from the elementary to the university and graduate level.

In 2021 she performed the role of Anna Howard Shaw in the Equity world premiere of *The Suffragist*.



# Darwin Kohl

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DJ Kohl is thrilled to be included in his first production with CROpera. DJ is currently an undergrad student at the University of Iowa studying voice performance. He has been involved in theater in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. He has been in productions at Theater Cedar Rapids which include *Elf the Musical* and *Full Monty* and he has performed with Iowa City Community Theater in productions of *Assassins* and *A Grand Night for Singing*. When not in class or performing DJ is part of the Iowa City Community Theater board. He is thankful you decided to support the arts!



# Sean P. Wallace

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Sean Wallace is a 24-year-old baritone from LeClaire, Iowa. While previously studying under Leanne Freeman-Miller at Drake University, he performed in DMMO's production of *Die Zauberflöte*. Sean performed in many roles in Drake Opera Theatre such as The Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* as well as Guglielmo in their production of *Così fan tutte*. He attended Lamont School of music under Heidi Melton and while at Lamont, Sean was cast as Businessman in their 2023 production of *The Little Prince* as well as many roles in their scenes programs. He finished his master's degree with the principal role of Bottom from Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and shortly after performed at the Berlin Dramatic Voices Program in the role of Orest in *Elektra*. He will be performing Dr. Falke in QCO's production of *Die Fledermaus* in June 2025.



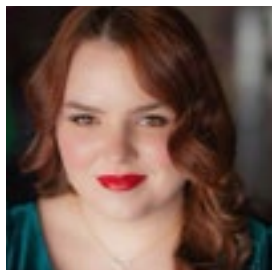


# Katie Stuelke

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Katie Stuelke works at Cedar Rapids Opera as the Marketing and Office Manager. Katie is a 2019 graduate of Luther College, where she received a

Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Policy with a minor in Music. While at Luther, Katie was awarded the Brudos Prize in Opera Performance, an award given to an outstanding opera performance student. She then went on to pursue master's level coursework in opera performance at Oklahoma City University. Previous roles include Gianetta in *The Gondoliers*, Mrs. Jenks in *The Tender Land*, and Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Katie's cover work includes the roles of Fiordiligi in *Così fan Tutte* and Magda Sorel in *The Consul*. Katie currently lives in Cedar Rapids with her husband, 2 dogs, a cat, 2 bearded dragons, a very large fish tank, and an additional constant rotation of Adopt-a-Pal foster dogs.



# Kate O'Connell

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Soprano Kate O'Connell is a Cedar Rapids native, currently pursuing Bachelor's degrees in Vocal Performance and English at the University of Iowa, where she studies with mezzo-soprano Dr. Élise DesChamps. Recent credits include Fiordiligi in the University's fall 2024 production of *Così fan tutte*, and Rumer in the Iowa premier of *Fierce*, written and directed by Iowa professor of jazz, Dr. William Menefield. Other opera and scene credits include *Il matrimonio segreto* (Elisetta), *Don Giovanni* (Donna Elvira), *Die Zauberflöte* (Pamina), *Hansel und Gretel* (Gretel), *Hamlet* (Ophélie), and *La Traviata* (chorus). Ms. O'Connell also frequently performs as a featured soloist; *Schubert's Mass in G* and Mozart's *Laudate Dominum* have been among her favorite works to perform.



# David Medin

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Dave Medin has performed locally at Theatre Cedar Rapids, Starlighters II, ICCT, City Circle, and several independent productions, as well as singing with Chorale Midwest, OrchestraIowa, and Cedar Rapids Opera. His most recent concert role was as Curly in *A Grand Night for Singing* at the Englert Theatre. Previous to that, he was Father in *Children of Eden*, an independent production in Iowa City. Dave has been in the chorus of many recent Cedar Rapids Opera productions, including *Tosca*, *Turandot*, *La Traviata*, *Madame Butterfly*, and *Pagliacci/Cavalleria Rusticana*. He currently studies with Dr. Bradley Barrett.



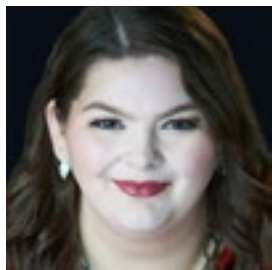
# Leah Podzimek

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Hailed as “opulent and rich”, Soprano Leah Podzimek’s recent roles include Liú (*Turandot*) with St. Petersburg Opera, Mrs. Gleaton (*Susannah*) with Opera Fort Collins, Fulang/Rosita (*Frida Kahlo...*) with Central City Opera, and Princess Dora (*The Three Feathers*) with Opera Steamboat.

This season she will perform with Colorado’s premier new music group, The Playground Ensemble, and return to St. Pete Opera to perform Mrs. Segstrom in *A Little Night Music* and cover Micaëla in *Carmen*.

Leah received her BM in Voice Performance from Wartburg College and MA from Goldsmiths, University of London. She currently studies with Dramatic Soprano Alexandra LoBianco.



# Joley Seitz

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Joley Seitz, soprano, is from Cedar Falls, Iowa. She recently graduated this past May with her Master's of Music: Vocal Performance from University of Northern Iowa. Recently, Joley performed the role of Suor Angelica (*Suor Angelica*) with the University of Northern Iowa, as Senta (*Die fliegende Holländer*) and Sieglinde (*Die Walküre*) in scenes with the Boston Wagner Society led by Jane Eaglen, and was part of the 2024 Bay View Music Festival ANSI group led by Dr. Everett McCorvery.



# Jaime Marie Webb

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Soprano, Jaime Marie Webb, has appeared in leading roles across the U.S. and internationally. Most recently, she made her Carnegie Hall debut singing scenes as Violetta and Lakmé. During the upcoming season, Webb will make her debut as Violetta Valéry at the Teatro Ángela Peralta in Mazatlán, Mexico and will return to Opera Omaha as Mavis in *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*. Select performance credits include Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Musetta in *La bohème*, Hanna Glawari in *Die lustige Witwe*, and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.



# Stephanie Goff

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Stephanie Goff is a singer, actress, and voice talent. Around town, she has performed with CRO, Revival Theatre Company, SPT Theatre, Old Creamery

Theatre, and on the beautiful lawns of Brucemore. She has also performed with the Pensacola Opera, at Starlight Theatre in Kansas City, and as a soloist with the Northwest Florida Orchestra and the Pensacola Chamber Orchestra. Stephanie enjoys acting in independent films and commercials, and has lent her voice to numerous corporate training courses.





# Mary Jane Knight

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A talented and diverse musician, Mary Jane Knight is singer/songwriter, pianist, poet, opera singer, voice teacher, choral conductor, and a graduate of Simpson College (BM) and the University of Nebraska (MM). Mary Jane has been teaching, directing, and performing across the Midwest for twenty-five years. She loves singing and helping people discover the magic and power of the voice. In the last few years, she has begun composing and will be soon releasing a self-produced solo album *Rising Free: Songs of Healing*. She has also written her first choral piece *I Have a Voice*, arranged for both SATB and SSA and begun work on a poetry book manuscript which delves into her journey of healing within. She teaches exclusively in her studio Knightingale Voice in Iowa City where she offers voice sessions, vocal empowerment workshops, and hosts an online community Voices of the Heart.



# Daniel Kleinknecht

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Daniel Kleinknecht is Founder, Artistic Director and Conductor of Cedar Rapids Opera. As founder of CRO, he has led the company in over 70 performances of major operatic repertoire, and under his leadership the company has received eleven National Endowment for the Arts grants, received the Governor's Award for Excellence, and has established a nationally recognized Young Artist Program that has hired over 800 graduate and undergraduate singers for the program. The company has commissioned several new works -- *Too Many Sopranos*, *Frankenboy*, and *Strokes of Genius: The Grant Wood Operas*.

Kleinknecht was an associate professor of music at Mount Mercy University where he led the Choir on more than 15 national and international tours; he still teaches several classes there each year. He holds degrees from Oberlin College, Indiana University, and the University of Iowa. He has been on several adjudication panels for the National Endowment for the Arts. Kleinknecht's articles can be found in the American Choral Review and the Choral Journal.

Kleinknecht has conducted the Long Bay Symphony, Evansville Chamber Orchestra, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, members of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Opera Illinois, Orchestra Iowa, Opera Ithaca, Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Singers, the Fort Dodge Symphony, the Hunter Symphony and Hunter Opera Theatre, where he led the New York premiere of *Too Many Sopranos* at the Danny Kaye Playhouse, New York Chamber Orchestra, and the Iowa City Community Orchestra, and several national tours of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. The Peoria Journal wrote, "with Kleinknecht at the podium, the sound was wonderfully hall-filling and alive with exceptional power and grace." The Myrtle Beach Press said "what was most impressive was Kleinknecht...he controlled every aspect of the music." Live performances have been broadcast regularly on Iowa Public Radio. Productions of *Salome* and *Madama Butterfly* have been telecast on Iowa Public Television, and the *Salome* has been viewed by over 45,000 patrons on the CRO Youtube channel.

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# SIP SAVOR & SING

**A Wine & Opera New Year's Eve Celebration  
with the stars of *Cinderella*!**

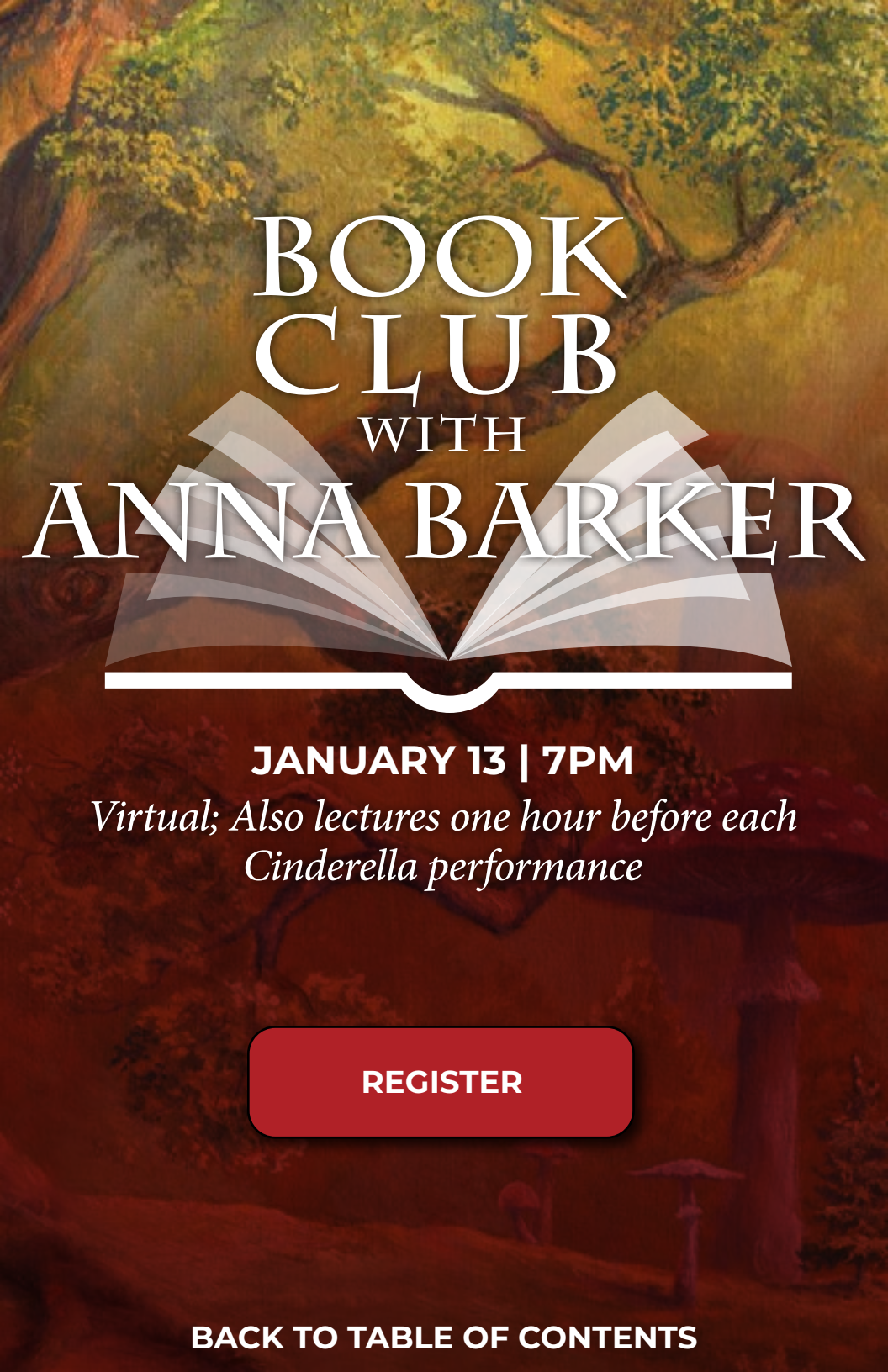
Ring in the new year with Cedar Rapids Opera! Hear performances by the crown jewels of the cast of *Cinderella* as you are guided through a premium wine-tasting, with each new glass paired to a different gorgeous aria.

[PRE-REGISTER](#)

WITH CEDAR RAPIDS OPERA



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**BOOK  
CLUB  
WITH  
ANNA BARKER**

**JANUARY 13 | 7PM**

*Virtual; Also lectures one hour before each  
Cinderella performance*

**REGISTER**

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# THE MAGICAL KIDS ART INSTALLATION



***Be part of the magic!***

See your Cinderella artwork on display at the Paramount Theatre!

[LEARN MORE](#)

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CEDAR RAPIDS **OPERA** PRESENTS



# INDERELLA

*Cendrillon* by Jules Massenet

ORCHESTRA  
IOWA

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 17 2025 | 7:30 PM**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 19 2025 | 2 PM**

**THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE**

**BUY TICKETS**

PERFORMED IN ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUPERTITLES

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# THE ROYAL BRUNCH

**JANUARY 19 | 11AM**

*Join us for brunch at the Paramount Theatre  
before Sunday's show!*

**PRE-REGISTER**

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# SONG *of the* NIGHTINGALE

**BY LISA DESPAIN**

March 22, 2025 | 7:30pm

Ballantyne Auditorium at Kirkwood

March 23, 2025 | 2:00pm

Coralville Center for the Performing Arts



**BUY TICKETS**

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## FROM THE CRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you for joining us tonight, and for making a positive impact on our community by supporting local art, artists, and small businesses.

As we approach the season of giving, we invite you to increase your impact. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor offering a **2:1 match**, your contribution to CRO will be **tripled**! Every dollar you give will unlock an additional two dollars, up to \$25,000, allowing us to maximize your support.

With your help, we can continue to offer transformative experiences for students and opera enthusiasts of all ages. Join us in making this season our most memorable yet!

[MAKE A DONATION](#)

**INVEST IN THE MAGIC OF OPERA:  
IT'S THE PERFECT FIT.**



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Daniel Kleinknecht, Founder & Artistic Director  
Thaddeus Ennen, General Director  
Katie Stuelke, Marketing & Office Manager

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