

PLAYBILL

The Music Department
Presents The

CSUSB Chamber Singers

Featuring:

Music from The Wiz

A Chorus Line

Hamilton

Cats

Pippin

April 29, 2025

12:00 PM • PA 102



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO

Department of Music

CSUSB CHAMBER SINGERS

BROADWAY MELODIES

Tuesday April 29, 2025

NOON

Lesley Leighton, conductor

Alastair Edmonstone, pianist

Kellen McNeil, student conductor

Monica Sanchez, student conductor

Wendi Shaffer, student conductor

Program

Ease on Down the Road (The Wiz) Music and Words: Charlie Smalls

Soloists:

Cassie Perez, *soprano 1*

Wendi Shaffer, *soprano 2*

Anastasia Brubaker, *alto*

Cats Medley

Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber

Words: T.S. Eliot

Soloists:

Jalonis Taylor, *tenor*

Adam Arroyo, *bass*

Anastasia Brubaker, *alto*

Cameron Ruggiero, *baritone*

Kellen McNeil, *conductor*

Wendi Shaffer, *conductor*

Monica Sanchez, *conductor*

Pippin Medley

Music and Words: Stephen Schwartz

Soloists:

Jalonis Taylor, *tenor*

Anastasia Brubaker, *alto*

Cameron Ruggiero, *baritone*

Brian Maize, *tenor*

Elizabeth Araiza, *soprano*

Hamilton Medley

Music and Words: Lin-Manuel Miranda

Soloists:

Cameron Ruggiero, *baritone*

Anastasia Brubaker, *alto*

Elizabeth Araiza, *soprano*

Monica Sanchez, *soprano*

Anthony San Antonio, *baritone*

A Chorus Line Medley

Music: Marvin Hamlisch

Text: Edward Kleban

Soloists:

Elizabeth Araiza, *soprano*

Monica Sanchez, *soprano*

Cassandra Perez, *soprano*

Astrid Vazquez, *soprano*

Jessica Paez, *alto*

Program Notes

The Wiz opened on Broadway in January 1975, and won seven Tony and five Drama Desk awards, including Best Musical and Best Original Score. A reimagining of the 1900 L. Frank Baum children's novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, *The Wiz* is written and viewed through the context of contemporary African-American culture. *Ease on Down the Road* is the retelling of *Follow the Yellow Brick Road* from the original *Wizard of Oz* movie, with an upbeat score that features 70s rhythms and popular music influence. It was one of the earliest musicals which starred an all-black cast, and featured Stephanie Mills as Dorothy, Hinton Battle as the Scarecrow, Tiger Haynes as Tin Man, and Ted Ross as the Lion. *Ease on Down the Road* was reprised three times in the show, first sung by Dorothy and Scarecrow, then Dorothy, Scarecrow, and Tin Man, and finally Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion.

Cats opened on Broadway in 1982, and won a Lawrence Olivier award for Best New Music, and three Tony awards for Best Musical, Best Book, and Best Original Score. It is a sung-through musical with no dialogue in between the music. The poetry is by T.S. Eliot, and is

taken from his 1939 collection called *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. Lloyd Webber began setting Eliot's poems in 1977, and the composition was originally a song cycle. It became a musical in 1981, and was initially rebuked by investors; however, as of 2024, *Cats* is the fifth longest running show on Broadway.

Pippin opened on Broadway in 1972, and won a Tony award for Best Revival of a musical. It was choreographed for Broadway by the legendary Bob Fosse. Composed by Schwartz originally for as a student show at Carnegie Melon, once Schwartz made the choice to develop it for Broadway, the show was completely revamped, and Fosse was brought on to choreograph it. Ben Vereen, Jill Clayburgh, and John Rubinstein were in the original Broadway cast; all of them went on to have long careers on and off Broadway.

Hamilton opened on Broadway in August 2015, and won eight Drama Desk Awards including Outstanding Musical, and 11 Tony Awards, including Best Musical. The music draws on R&B, Hip-Hop, pop, soul, and traditional showtunes style music. Miranda played the role of Hamilton in the original production. The story is a biography of founding father Alexander Hamilton during the American Revolution and the early history of the United States. Miranda described the show as "America then, as told by America now;" however, it is interesting to note that when the text is examined with eyes from 2025, it seems dated.

A Chorus Line opened on Broadway in July 1975, and won nine Tony Awards in addition to the 1976 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The premise of *A Chorus Line* is the process that 17 dancers auditioning for spot in a chorus line go through. Through the lyrics and the music, we glimpse the lives of the auditioners, how they grew up, and what brought them to now. The show opened at the Schubert Theatre and was set on a bare stage, to give the audience the sense of being in the house with the producer, who throughout the piece is just a disembodied voice coming from the dark of the house. It was the longest-running Broadway show until it was surpassed by *Cats* in 1997. The dancers are in rehearsal clothes throughout the show until the final number when they are dressed in identical gold costumes.

CSUSB CHAMBER SINGERS

Luis Alvarado	Heather Lee	Jessica Paez
Elizabeth Araiza	Brian Maize	Cassandra Perez
Samira Arenas	Lucas Martinez	Aldo Ramirez
Adam Arroyo	Kellen McNeil	Serafin Razo
Uriel Avila	Mersiah Menchaca	Anthony Reynaga
Paloma Barrientos	Abigail Metzger	Ian Rojas
Luis Bautista	Jovanni Monzon	Cameron Ruggiero
Anastasia Brubaker	Matthew Morales Martinez	Anthony San Antonio
Angel Calvillo	Allie Morones	Monica Sanchez
Thalia Contreras	Nicholas Mundo	Wendi Shaffer
Jose Garcia Sotelo	Oscar Munoz	Annabelle Su
Cesar Garcia	Ethan Nickell	Jalonis Taylor
Daisy Garcia	Daniel Nunez	Astrid Vazquez
Eduardo Garcia	Siri O'Neill-Navarro	Aaron Ventura
Miguel Gonzalez Carrillo	Gabriel Orozoco	Kendell Williamson
Jan Hanken	Henrietta Oyes	

Bios

LESLEY LEIGHTON, *conductor*



Lesley Leighton has performed as a conductor and singer at Lincoln Center, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Hollywood Bowl, Opernhaus Köln, Glyndebourne, and Glimmerglass, and has worked with and prepped for world-renowned conductors Gustavo

Dudamel, John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Leonard Slatkin, David Newman, Anthony Parnter, and the late Bramwell Tovey, in addition to composers David Lang, John Adams, and Eric Whitacre. She made her Los Angeles Opera and Los Angeles Philharmonic conducting debuts in the 2018-19 season in two works by David Lang, in addition to preparing Los Robles Master Chorale for its debut at the Ojai Festival. She is currently the Principal Guest Conductor of the San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra, performing with them several times a season, and was the Associate Conductor of Los Angeles Master Chorale from 2010-2016, in addition to

serving as the Artistic Director of Los Robles Master Chorale from 2007-2022. She most recently worked with the LA Phil in December 2024, preparing the chorus for conductor and film composer David Newman, for the live to screen performance of *Home Alone*, which she will also prepped in December of 2023, featuring the chorus of CSUSB. She also serves as the Department of Music Chair, and Director of Conducting & Choral Activities at California State University San Bernardino, is the Director of Music at Glendale First United Methodist Church, and has recently been appointed Artistic Director of Angeles Chorale.

Leighton's voice can be heard on more than 120 film and television soundtracks, most recently on *Ghostbusters 3*, *Chucky*, *Super Mario Bros. Movie*, *Captain Marvel*, *Sing2*, *Mulan*, *Deadpool*, and *Twisters* (both 2024 and 1996) as well as classics like *Frozen I & II*, and *The Lion King*. She recently recorded the soundtrack for *Superman* at Warner Brothers for its July 2025 release in movie theatres. A native of Los Angeles, Leighton earned a BA in conducting from Loyola Marymount University, an MM in vocal performance and a DMA in conducting and choral music from the University of Southern California.

ALASTAIR EDMONSTONE, Music Director/Piano



An advocate of modern music, Alastair Edmonstone has collaborated with leading composers such as Jonathan Harvey, Lee Hyla, Huck Hodge, and Gunther Schuller. Notable performances include the Seattle premier of Luciano Berio's *Sonata per pianoforte solo*, the Boston premier of Gunther Schuller's *Grand Concerto for Percussion and Keyboards*, which he recorded for Naxos records, and over a dozen performances of Olivier Messiaen's legendary piano cycle *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* throughout the USA, Canada and Europe.

As chamber musician, Edmonstone has performed with members of the Baltimore and Boston Symphony Orchestras, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Los Angeles Opera Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Orpheus Orchestra and Canadian Brass.

A native of Perth, Scotland, he is a graduate of the University of Washington (DMA), New England Conservatory (MM, GD) and Birmingham Conservatoire (Bmus). Since 2016 he has been Keyboard Collaborative Artist and Music Director of Opera Theater at California State University, San Bernardino and was a visiting lecturer in Musical Theater at the University of Southern California during the 2021-22 year.

KELLEN McNEIL, *student conductor*

Kellen McNeil received the Presidential Academic Excellence Scholarship as part of his entrance to CSUSB, and he is currently a fourth-year student and is a dual major in Music Education and Music Conducting. During his time at CSUSB, he has been involved in a variety of music ensembles including Symphony Orchestra, Symphonic Band, Cello Ensemble, Early Music Ensemble, Chamber Singers, and Opera. Kellen has been periodically conducting the Chamber Singers as student conductor for the past two years, and has volunteered for the Riverside Arts Academy while attending CSUSB.

MONICA SANCHEZ, *student conductor*

A senior at CSUSB, Monica Sanchez is a double major in the Bachelor of Music, Conducting performance and Music Education programs. She has worked with nationally recognized film composer and conductor, David Newman, new music specialist and opera singer, Stacey Fraser, and conductor and singer, Lesley Leighton. Sanchez performed in the CSUSB Opera Theatre production of *Opera as Song* in Fall 2023, where she had both solo and trio movements. Most notably, she sang with the Los Angeles Philharmonic for its live-to-screen performances of *Home Alone* in December 2023 and 2024. She made her conducting debut in CSUSB Chamber Singers' concert, *Peace & Love* in Spring 2024. A native of Baldwin Park, California, she holds an A.A. in Music from Mt. San Antonio College.

WENDI SHAFFER, *student conductor*

A junior at CSUSB, **Wendi Shaffer** is a double major in the Bachelor of Music, Conducting Performance and Bachelor of Music in Music

Education programs. She has worked as both a clarinetist and a vocalist with conductors David Newman, John Mario di Costanza, and Eleanor Nuñez. She has performed as the principal clarinetist of the Victor Valley College Symphonic Band as well as the CSUSB Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Band. She played as a clarinetist for the Victor Valley College productions of *West Side Story* and *Cabaret*. Most notably, she performed as a singer with the Los Angeles Philharmonic for its live-to-screen performances of *Home Alone* in December 2024. A native of Hesperia, California, she has performed at venues all over Southern California, from the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to Knott's Berry Farm, and Walt Disney Concert Hall.

THE CSUSB CHAMBER SINGERS is a vocal ensemble of 30-50 voices, focusing on a variety of repertoire that ranges from the classical canon (pieces composed by Palestrina, Bach, Mozart, Duruflé, Orff, i.e.), to modern works by Whitacre, Collier, Betinis, and Lang to music theatre and film. The group sings one complete masterwork from the classical canon each year, in addition to programs of modern repertoire and premiere works written by new composers. For the past two Decembers this group has sung with the choir prepared by Lesley Leighton at Walt Disney Concert Hall for film composer and conductor David Newman, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the live-to-screen performances of *Home Alone*.

Want to sing with us? You don't have to be a music major; you just need to love singing with others and making music together! Join us in Chamber Singers (MUS 3860)!

We rehearse Tuesday and Thursday, from 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM.



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