



**Sarah Joy Polante Sy, soprano**  
**John Cozza, piano; John Iosefa, off-stage voice**

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**SYLVAH!**

changing → focus

**Scene I. The Apartment**

Whatever Happened To My Part? ( <i>Monty Python's Spamalot</i> )	John Duprez/ Eric Idle
Song of Perfect Propriety ( <i>Songs of Perfect Propriety</i> )	Seymour Barab/Dorothy Parker
Glitter and Be Gay ( <i>Candide</i> )	Leonard Bernstein/Richard Wilbur
I Feel Good ( <i>Minicabs</i> )	William Bolcom/Arnold Weinstein
People Change ( <i>Minicabs</i> )	Bolcom/Weinstein
Don't Laugh ( <i>Hot Spot</i> )	Mary Rodgers/Martin Charnin/Stephen Sondheim
A Gift to Share ( <i>Encountertenor</i> )	Jake Heggie/John Hall

**Scene II. Choosing Repertoire**

Finale: Mystery of the Song? ( <i>Minicabs</i> )	Bolcom/Weinstein
Envoi ( <i>Miss Manners on Music</i> )	Dominick Argento/Judith Martin
Coda ( <i>Songs of Perfect Propriety</i> )	Barab/Parker
I will never forgive you ( <i>Minicabs</i> )	Bolcom/Weinstein
The Ladies Who Lunch ( <i>Company</i> )	Stephen Sondheim
Maxim #1 ( <i>Minicabs</i> )	Bolcom/Weinstein

**Scene III. The Rehearsal**

Vocal Modesty	Thomas Pasatieri/Gerald Walker
How Will I Know? ( <i>Death Takes a Holiday</i> )	Maury Yeston
The Best Thing of All ( <i>Regina</i> )	Marc Blitzstein

**Scene IV. The Final Countdown**

Final Monologue from <i>Master Class</i>	Jake Heggie/Terrence McNally
Night Waltz III (cut from <i>A Little Night Music</i> )	Stephen Sondheim

**Scene V. The Recording**

Audition Song

*(continued on other side)*

*This graduate project is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Music in Performance.*

*Sarah Joy Polante Sy is a student of Professor Claudia Kitka.*

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## **MUSC 500: ORIGIN AND CONCEPT**

I knew at some point in my graduate journey, I would have to show how my experience shaped me into a performer—that's why the MUSC 500: Cumulative Experience exists. I found that doing a thesis, a recital, or a dissertation would not encapsulate my actual experience as a graduate student.

You see, I have completed two concurrent bachelor degrees: one in Vocal Performance and the other in Music Production and Sound Design for Visual Media. I worked as an audio-visual technician, post-production editor, and mixing engineer—when not performing in straight plays, musicals, or concerts. I found I enjoyed being able to incorporate my degrees together in productions that I performed in pre- and post-COVID. Thankfully, I asked Claudia Kitka, my advisor for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees at California State University, Sacramento's School of Music, if it was possible to combine all these elements into my cumulative experience: naturally, the idea of SYLVAH! was born as a one-woman show. What a great way to showcase my experience than through a performance!

From the script to the sound and light arrangements, I want to show you—the audience—what a portion of a performer's life looks like before they start rehearsals for a show or concert. Even before the auditions. In this case, Sylvah is already an internationally known performer in the classical genre. Her agent, Porter, sees that while she is doing well, she has the potential to be a crossover singer. Watch as Sylvah's life go up and down as she tackles this challenge of auditioning for a new production.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my family for being the support that drives me forward in my endeavors in life. I would also like to thank Claudia for being with me through every step of this journey, both in my undergraduate and graduate experience. Dr. John Cozza, thank you so very much for being my accompanist and for being so open-minded with the projects I have thrown at you. It's been an honor to work and develop with you both. To John Iosefa, thank you for bringing Porter to life and being the voice we needed.

Thank you to: the Theatre and Dance Department for allowing this project to use their set props; Lamar, Kyle, and Audrey, for taking care of my audio-visual needs and for broadcasting this event on the School of Music Facebook Page; Glenn for the stage management, lighting, and printing of programs; Ryan Murray and Sue Metz, for being a part of my graduate committee; and to the School of Music, for being a musical home for the years I have been here.

— Sarah Joy Polante Sy

## **ADVISOR'S NOTES**

Working on this 500 project with Sarah has given me the opportunity to once again be part of a unique creation. Decades ago, my late colleague Carole Delaney and I created several "one-woman" shows, scripted and fully staged, using songs from musical theatre, movies, and the American Songbook, as the popular standards are now known. "One-woman" is in quotes because the shows would not have existed without Carole's brilliant arrangements and improvisational skills. Sarah has brought her extraordinary voice and talent, her intellect, curiosity, indefatigable energy and enthusiasm to create the show you will enjoy this evening. The process has been incredibly rewarding and I see this as a glimpse into her future.

— Claudia Kitka

**SYLVAH !**  
**A Master of Music 500 Project written by Sarah Joy Polante Sy**  
**Friday, 7:00 p.m., May 13, 2022, Capistrano Concert Hall**

**PROGRAM NOTES**

**CAST**

**Sylvah - Sarah Joy Polante Sy**

**John - John Cozza**

**Porter - John Iosefa**

**BIOGRAPHIES**

**Sarah Joy Polante Sy** is a Northern California-based soprano pursuing a Master of Music with a concentration in performance. She has finished her two concurrent undergraduate degrees: a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at California State University, Sacramento, and a Bachelor in Fine Arts: Music Production and Sound Design at Academy of Art University, San Francisco. She performs with Schola Cantorum directed by Don Kendrick and has been an audio engineer and an international recording artist with performances in Manila, Vancouver, and London. Some of her recent roles include a guitar-playing Cisco (*Woody Guthrie's American Song*), and as an accordion musician and ensemble member in *Mr. Burns: a Post-Electric Play*. Her prominent experience in performing involves twelve years of performing with *Sinag-tala Theatre and Performing Arts Association*, a touring, non-profit Filipino cultural ensemble for which she also served as choral director for five seasons. She has been an award recipient for the SFBAC NATS Singing Festival, Mu Phi Epsilon competitions, and the Sacramento Saturday Club Scholarship for Voice. She has been the collegiate president of the Mu Phi Epsilon-Alpha Delta chapter in Sacramento since 2020, and when she is not performing, she is frequently behind the soundboard or technical portion of productions in the Northern California region. She is excited to share *SYLVAH !* with you as well as her upcoming role as Nella in the CSUS Opera's production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*.

**John Cozza** has been the Staff Accompanist at Sacramento State since 2004, and took over as Music Director and Pianist/Organist at St. Michael's Episcopal Church in 2018. Dr. Cozza holds a DM degree in Piano Performance, Vocal Accompanying, and Chamber Music from Northwestern University. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at USC, where he was named Valedictorian of the School of Music, and a Diplom for Piano Performance and Chamber Music from the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna. Dr. Cozza was named Director of Accompanying at Baylor University (Waco, TX) in 1994 and taught Accompanying and Secondary Piano in the Conservatory of Music at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California from 2004-2018. Dr. Cozza is the current President of the Sacramento Saturday Club, the oldest musical organization in Sacramento, and one of the oldest west of the Rockies. Collaborating with singers and instrumentalists throughout the United States, Dr. Cozza's international engagements have included performances as soloist, accompanist, and chamber musician in European cities such as Vienna, Bologna, Milan, Cologne, and Budapest.

**John Iosefa** is primarily a church musician currently serving as Director of Music at St. Francis of Assisi, Sacramento. He is a full-time student at California State University, Sacramento, pursuing a Bachelor of Music: Music Education degree. John has performed as Masetto (*Mozart's Don Giovanni*) and is grateful to be asked to play his role in this performance where his character does not get beat up for a change. He is looking forward to performing alongside Sarah Sy in the fall for the performance of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*.

## Scene I. The Apartment

Sylvah enters, obviously upset. What happened? As she tries to get over the day's events, her agent Porter calls. He wants to know if she has even thought about the new opportunity he recently presented to her.

### **John Du Prez (b.1946)**

John Du Prez is a Grammy Award winning composer (*Fish Called Wanda*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*). As a Trevelyan Scholar at Christ Church, Oxford, he worked as a Music Lecturer at Goldsmiths College until 1979 when he entered the film industry composing music for *Monty Python's Life of Brian*. Du Prez also played trumpet with the UK salsa band *Modern Romance*, a frequent name in the Top 40 during the 1980s. In 2001, he and Eric Idle co-wrote *Monty Python's Spamalot*, the Grammy-award winner for Best Musical Show Album and the 2005 Tony-award nomination for Best Musical. He conducted their comic oratorio *Not The Messiah* on a world tour which included Sydney Opera House, Houston Opera, Wolftrap (National Symphony Orchestra), Hollywood Bowl (Los Angeles Philharmonic) and finally the Albert Hall (BBC Symphony) for the Python 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In 2014, he was appointed MD for the *Monty Python O2 Arena* concerts and then began scoring 104 episodes of the BAFTA award-winning TV-series, *The Clangers*.

### **Seymour Barab (1921-2014)**

Seymour Barab was an American composer, cellist, pianist, and organist known for his operas for young audiences, such as *Chanticleer*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and his featured opera and Pulitzer Prize nominee, *Phillip Marshall*. Born in Chicago, Illinois, he studied piano and started playing the cello in high school. He performed as a cellist with the Indiana Symphony Orchestra and traveled to other orchestras in Philadelphia, California, and Oregon, and New York. After moving to New York, he played for the American Broadcasting Company and Columbia Broadcasting System while helping found the New Music Quartet of New York and the New York Pro Musica Antiqua. It was in Paris that he started composing songs, which later led to him setting music to Dorothy Parker's poems in his *Songs of Perfect Propriety*. As a composer, he taught at Rutgers University, Black Mountain College, and the New England Conservatory of Music while being a recording studio musician. He was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Opera Association in 1998 and was an active composer until he passed.

### **Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)**

Known in both the classical and popular music genres, Leonard Bernstein was an American conductor, composer, and pianist. His notable works include *Fancy Free!*, *On the Town*, and music for the operetta *Candide* and musical *West Side Story*. Born in Massachusetts, he started playing piano at the age of 10. He performed in his first radio series in 1934 as a pianist in Boston, and as a concerto pianist with the Boston Public Schools Symphony Orchestra playing the first movement of Grieg's Piano Concerto. He graduated in Music from Harvard University and received his diploma in conducting from the Curtis Institute of Music. He later worked as an assistant to Serge Koussevitzky at Tanglewood, and he recorded with the RCA-Victor company. He directed the New York City Symphony and was the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He later became known as the host of the television version of the radio program called the "Young People's Concert" that helped expose the youth to classical music nationwide.

### **William Bolcom (b. 1938)**

National Medal of Arts, Pulitzer Prize, and Grammy Award-winner William Bolcom (born May 26, 1938) is an American composer known for his engaging and entertaining vocal pieces, such as his “minicabs” with lyricist Arnold Weinstein. He taught at the University of Michigan’s School of Music for thirty-five years and was named the Ross Lee Finney Distinguished University Professor of Composition in 1994. Bolcom won the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1988 for *12 New Etudes for Piano*, and his setting of William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience* on the Naxos label won four Grammy Awards in 2005. Bolcom has performed and recorded his own work frequently with his wife Joan Morris. Cabaret songs, show tunes, and American popular songs of the 20th century have been their primary specialties in both concerts and recordings.

### **Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021)**

A moving force in the musical theatre world, Stephen Sondheim was an American composer and lyricist with a career span of over sixty years in classical, musical theatre, and television works. Born in New York, he moved with his mother to Pennsylvania where he started studying musical theatre under his neighbor, Oscar Hammerstein II as he had prior music experience in piano. He studied music at Williams College in Massachusetts where he wrote several student shows and was awarded the Hutchinson Prize for composition, a fellowship that allowed him to study music with Milton Babbitt in New York. While Sondheim started with television work in Hollywood, his first breakthrough was as a lyricist for *West Side Story* with music by Leonard Bernstein in 1957 and *Gypsy* with Jule Styne. He continued to maintain his streak in his career with the sheer amount of iconic shows and Tony and Grammy Award successes: *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Smiles on a Summer Night* (1955), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Into the Woods* (1987), *Assassins* (1990), and *Passion* (1994). Sondheim’s *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984) won the 1985 Pulitzer Prize. His shows have been movies, and he contributed to many films such as Madonna’s “Sooner or Later,” the 1991 Academy Award winner for Best Original Song. The Kennedy Center presented a celebration of Sondheim’s work in 2002. Sondheim was presented with the National Medal of the Arts from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1997, a lifetime achievement Tony Award in 2008, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015. He was inducted into the American Theatre Hall of Fame in 2014, and was able to continue connecting musical genres and theatre with his craft until he passed in 2021.

### **Jake Heggie (b.1961)**

Jake Heggie is an San Francisco-based American composer writing for opera, art songs, one-acts, chamber music, choir, and orchestra. Many of his almost 300 art songs are recorded and his operas such as *Dead Man Walking* and *Moby Dick* are performed extensively on five continents. He studied composition under Ernst Bacon while in his teens and with Johana Harris, Paul DesMarais, Roger Bourland, and David Raskin at UCLA. A Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, he has served as a composer mentor for Washington National Opera’s American Opera Initiative, Chicago’s Vanguard Initiative, and Boulder’s New Opera Workshops. Heggie was also awarded the Eddie Medora King Prize and the Champion Award. He is a frequent guest artist and keynote speaker at universities and conservatories internationally.

## Scene II. Choosing Repertoire

It's time for Sylvah to search for a song that will dazzle the casting directors for this new production. However, she is having a rough time finding the piece that will work. As frustrations grow, will it lead her to a breakthrough?

### **Dominick Argento (1927-2019)**

Dominick Argento was a Minnesota-based American composer known for his lyrical operas and song cycles, such as his article-based musical setting *Miss Manners on Music* and Pulitzer Prize winner *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. He received his bachelor and master degrees in piano performance at the Peabody Conservatory and his Ph.D. from the Eastman School of Music. Argento was also a Fulbright Scholar and Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, using both to start an annual routine to study in Italy where he studied briefly with Luigi Dallapiccola. He helped found the Center Opera Company which later became the Minnesota Opera and taught theory and composition at the Eastman School of Music and the University of Minnesota. He was elected to the Academy of Arts and Letters in 1979 and honored with the lifetime appointment of Composer Laureate by the Minnesota Orchestra. In 2016, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton officially declared August 8 to be Dominick Argento Day in Minnesota to commemorate Argento's compositional achievements.

## Scene III. The Rehearsal

This rehearsal session with her dear friend and accompanist, John, is more than just running through music. Years of collaboration have led to honest exchanges and valued insights regarding her career choices. After rehearsing her audition piece, they revisit an aria that sums up her new outlook.

### **Thomas Pasatieri (b.1945)**

Born in New York, American composer and Emmy Award winner Thomas Pasatieri has composed more than 400 songs and operas that have been performed by artists such as Janet Baker, Frederica von Stade, James Morris, Thomas Stewart, and Jennie Tourel. A prolific composer by age fifteen, he studied with Nadia Boulanger before receiving a scholarship from The Juilliard School at age sixteen. At nineteen, he received his first doctorate from Juilliard. He has studied under Vittorio Giannini and Vincent Persichetti, and has achieved honors with the Richard Rodgers Scholarship, the Marion Freschi Prize, the Irving Berlin Fellowship, and an Emmy Award. Pasatieri has taught at Juilliard, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Cincinnati Conservatory. He has also orchestrated for films such as *Finding Nemo* (2003), *Angels in America* (2003), *WALL-E* (2008), and *Wreck-It Ralph* (2012.). He currently lives in New York and runs his film production company, Topaz Productions.

### **Maury Yeston (b.1945)**

American composer, lyricist, and music theorist Maury Yeston is known for his range of works, from his Cello Concerto premiered by Yo-Yo Ma and his ballet, *Tom Sawyer: A Ballet in Three Acts* to his two Tony Award-winning musicals, *Nine* (1982) and *Titanic* (1997). Born in Jersey City, he started piano lessons at age five and became interested in musical theatre when he saw *My Fair Lady* at age ten. He has his bachelor degree in Music Theory and Composition from Yale University and his masters degree at Cambridge University after receiving a Mellon Fellowship for two years. While returning to the United States for a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, he finished his musicology doctorate at Yale. His musical *Nine* has been made into a film adaptation and its musical

revival with Antonio Banderas won a Tony Award for Best Musical Revival. His Off-Broadway works such as *Death Takes a Holiday* (2011), his contribution to the score for *Grand Hotel* (1989), and his score for Peter Stone and Thomas Meehan's *Phantom* (1991) have won multiple Drama Desk Awards. He is a lifetime member of the Council of the Dramatists Guild, a founding member of the Society for Music Theory, and is on the Board of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, The Kleban Foundation, and The Kurt Weill Foundation. He has also served on the editorial boards of *Musical Quarterly* and the advisory board of the Yale University Press Broadway Series. He has received the Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center Creative Arts Award for Artist of the Year and the Emerson College Artist of Distinction Award. He is an Ambassador of The Society of Composers and Lyricists. He considers his almost four decades of teaching his students as one of his most meaningful accomplishments.

### **Marc Blitzstein (1905-1964)**

American composer, lyricist, and librettist Marc Blitzstein was known for his works in theatre. Born in Philadelphia, Blitzstein showed interest and potential in the piano at a young age. He composed short piano pieces and lieder in his teens before studying composition at the Curtis Institute from 1924 to 1926, briefly traveling to Europe to study with Nadia Boulanger and Arnold Schoenberg. He was actively involved with the Composers Collective of New York and the New York Composers Forum-Laboratory, meeting Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Hanns Eisler, and Charles Seeger. He met and befriended Leonard Bernstein in 1939. His one-act opera *Triple Sec* (1928) ran on Broadway in 1930 and *Regina* (1949), an opera for Broadway, was met with positive reviews. His 1937 musical *The Cradle Will Rock* caused a critical sensation when the Federal Theatre Project tried to shut it down. His most notable work was *The Airborne Symphony* premiered under Bernstein in 1946. Though he passed unexpectedly, leaving numerous unfinished works, one of his major works, a three-act opera commissioned by the Ford Foundation and optioned by the Metropolitan Opera entitled *Sacco and Vanzetti*, was completed posthumously by composer Leonard Lehrman with the approval of Blitzstein's estate.

## **Scene IV. The Final Countdown**

Just as performers get jittery before opening night, Sylvah finds herself restless the evening before her recording session. Her music is prepared, and all her belongings are ready. She comes to terms with her previous accomplishments; and is looking forward to where else she may go as a performer.

## **Scene V. The Recording**

It's showtime for Sylvah—at least, for her video recording submission. While she has submitted numerous digital auditions for classical productions, she is very aware that she must show a broader range of movement and acting ability for this new venture. She slates her "Audition Song," and proceeds to make full use of what she has learned throughout this show's timeline.