



Mary Carrick

VOCALIST

Mary Carrick is a dynamic and versatile performer who transitions between musical theatre, cabaret, jazz, opera, contemporary styles and as a stage actor. Known for her lush, expressive & shimmering voice and for her ability to connect with audiences, she's a fearless singer with a gift for storytelling through song.

Ms. Carrick released her first solo album *Let's Fly*, a collection of reimagined classic and contemporary songs, in May 2014. Co-produced by J. Gawf, resident music director of Opera Omaha, the album features music by songwriters ranging from Cole Porter and Harold Arlen to Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Hank Williams and Craig Carnelia.

She's worked with numerous performing arts organizations across the Omaha metropolitan area, including Opera Omaha, The Rose, Omaha Symphony, and many theaters. She performed the role of Giovanna in Opera Omaha's 2014 production of *Rigoletto*. Several other Opera Omaha credits include Gertrude in *Hansel & Gretel* (cover/performed), Tango Singer in *The Great Gatsby* (scenes), and featured soloist in *Opera for a Cure*. Ms. Carrick was guest soloist for the signature Holiday Lights Festival concert at the Holland Performing Arts Center in 2013 and 2014. She has been a featured soloist with the Omaha Symphony in *Gilbert & Sullivan*, *Holiday Fanfare*, *All Aboard!* and Choral Collaborative.

Ms. Carrick performs across the Midwest as a concert and cabaret singer in venues ranging from cabaret rooms and theaters to restored opera houses and outdoor spaces. She made her Chicago cabaret debut in 2012 with her solo show *On My Way* and has studied cabaret and song interpretation with nationally renowned artists Betty Buckley, Sally Mayes, Becky Menzie, Rick Jensen and Lina Koutrakos.

She's received critical acclaim for her memorable performances at The Rose as Mother Abbess in *The Sound of Music* and Sour Kangaroo in *Seussical: The Musical* (Omaha Entertainment & Arts Award, 2013). Other notable roles include Madame Flora in *The Medium* (Shelterbelt Theatre), Lady Thiang in *The King and I* (Dundee Dinner Theatre) and Jenny in *Company* (Omaha Community Playhouse), among many others. Additional honors include Omaha Theater Arts Guild Awards for Outstanding Cabaret (*Songs from Broadway & Beyond*, 2008), Outstanding Lead Actress (*'night, Mother*, 2007) and Outstanding Featured Actress (*The Marriage of Bette & Boo*, 2003).

Ms. Carrick is a Touring Artist with the Nebraska Arts Council. In addition, she is an arts educator and often holds residencies with area students in the communities where she performs. She is also a member of Chicago Cabaret Professionals.

CONTACT:

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J. Gawf

PIANIST – MUSIC DIRECTOR

J. Gawf is an accomplished music director, conductor, vocal coach, pianist and arts educator. A native of Oklahoma, Mr. Gawf is the Resident Music Director for Opera Omaha and since 2004 has prepared a variety of traditional and contemporary classical repertoire for the company.

He has conducted Opera Omaha's productions of Rossini's *The Marriage Contract* and Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*. Mr. Gawf has served as Chorus Master for all Opera Omaha productions since 2008 and has developed and implemented education and outreach programs for Opera Omaha with the

Omaha Symphony, Omaha Area Youth Orchestras, the Rose Theater and numerous Omaha area high schools and middle schools. He also serves as Associate Conductor of the Omaha Symphony for the orchestra's annual Holiday production and as an accompanist & vocal coach throughout the season.

He has served as Chorus Master, Assistant Conductor and Accompanist for Opera Saratoga (formerly Lake George Opera) and has regularly worked with Augusta Opera and New Jersey Opera Theater. In 2007, J. was privileged to be Assistant to the Conductor and Orchestrator, Mark Flint, and Composer, David DiChiera for the World Premiere production, *Cyrano*, at Michigan Opera Theater.

Additional World Premiere musical preparation includes Anthony Davis' *Wakonda's Dream* and Paul Moravec's *The Blizzard Voices* for Opera Omaha and Ned Rorem's *Our Town* for Lake George Opera.

As a sought after vocal coach, Mr. Gawf has prepared singers ranging from internationally and nationally renowned artists, emerging artists and students at the collegiate level in a range of repertoire, including opera, art song, musical theater, contemporary American song, among others. His students have performed with major opera companies, on Broadway and in various national tours, regional and stock theaters.

Mr. Gawf served as artistic producer, music director, arranger and pianist for *Let's Fly*, the debut album of vocalist Mary Carrick, featuring a collection of reimagined classic and contemporary songs.

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JB FERGUSON

PERCUSSION

JB Ferguson is a percussion/drumset teacher and regular performer in the Omaha metropolitan area. In 2009, he received his Bachelor of Music-Technology Concentration degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where he studied percussion with Dr. Tomm Roland and Ken Yoshida, and drumset with Carlos Figueroa. JB has taught in a variety of settings, including school drum lines, his own private studio, and clinics for elementary schools. As a performer, JB can be heard backing many local artists in local venues and on studio recordings. He began performing with the Omaha Symphony Orchestra in 2008, and since has gone to share with stage with Itzhak Perlman, Edgar Meyer, Jackie Evancho, and Grammy Award winning artists Victor Vanacore and Sylvia McNair.



MARK HAAR

UPRIGHT BASS

Mark Haar received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Coe College in Cedar Rapids, IA, and a Masters of Music degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. In and around Nebraska, Mark has performed with the Omaha Symphony, the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra and was the Principal Bassist of the Sioux City Symphony. Currently he is a member of the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra. Mark has performed with many different jazz ensembles, everything from a small duo to a large big band jazz ensemble. Some of the groups with which Mark has performed include the Nebraska Jazz Orchestra, the Bluffs Big Band, the Omaha Big Band, the Matt Wallace Quartet, and the Darryl White Quartet. He has also played with blues bands, worship bands and musical theater pit orchestras including the pit orchestras of Broadway touring productions of *Wicked*, *Grease* and *Big*, as well as for many different stage productions at the Omaha Community Playhouse. With Mark's current jazz group, Novak & Haar, he has recorded *A Summer's Carol*, and *A Winter's Carol*, and *Old Friends*. All three of these albums have received both national and international attention. Along with his performing, Mark also teaches both double bass and electric bass guitar at Iowa Western Community College and at his private studio.

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