

Bard College Conservatory of Music

Alumni/ae Spotlight Series

Sun-Ly Pierce VAP '19, *mezzo-soprano*
Kayo Iwama, *piano*

Saturday, September 19, 2026 at 4:00 pm
László Z. Bitó '60 Conservatory Building, Performance Space

GIOVANNA D'ARCA (1832)

Gioacchino Antonio Rossini
(1792-1868)

Five Songs (1929)
Home Thoughts
White Moon
Joy
Loam
Sunsets

Ruth Crawford Seeger
(1901-1953)

– INTERMISSION –

Neruda Songs
Si no fuera porque tus ojos tienen color de luna
Amor, amor, las nubes a la torre del cielo
No estés lejos de mí un solo día, porque cómo
Ya eres mía. Reposa con tu sueño en mi sueño
Amor mío, si muero y tú no mueres

Peter Lieberman
(1946-2011)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Chinese-American mezzo-soprano **Sun-Ly Pierce**, Third Prize Winner of the 2024 Operalia competition, is rapidly establishing herself as a versatile and dynamic artist in both traditional and contemporary repertoire.

Sun-Ly's 26/27 season begins with her return to Houston Grand Opera for *Faust* (Siebel) and Boston Lyric Opera for *Le nozze di Figaro* (Cherubino). Other highlights of the season include Handel's *Messiah* with Boston Baroque and the Houston Symphony, Beethoven Symphony No. 9 with The Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Mozart's Requiem and Mass in C minor on tour with Les Musiciens du Louvre. She also returns to the stage at Carnegie Hall for a solo recital presented by the Music Academy of the West. Sun-Ly concludes the season at The Santa Fe Opera in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Rosina). Future engagements include leading roles at the New National Theatre Tokyo, Houston Grand Opera, and The Metropolitan Opera.

During the 25/26 season, Sun-Ly returned to The Metropolitan Opera for the world premiere of Mason Bates' *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* (Rosa Saks) conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and directed by Bartlett Sher. Other highlights of the season included debuts at LA Opera for *Akhmat* (Nefertiti), Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Théâtre de Caen for *La Calisto* (Diana), Semperoper Dresden and The Santa Fe Opera for *Madama Butterfly* (Suzuki), and Madison Opera for *Così fan tutte* (Dorabella).

Sun-Ly's 24/25 season included returns to notable theaters including The Metropolitan Opera in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Cherubino), Opera Philadelphia in *L'amant anonyme* (Dorothée), and Des Moines Metro Opera in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Fox).

She has won top prizes in the Marilyn Horne Song Competition, Dallas Opera National Vocal Competition, and Butler Opera International Voice Competition. A native of Clinton, New York, she holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music and Bard College Conservatory of Music.

Pianist **Kayo Iwama** has concertized extensively with singers such as Joshua Blue, Stephanie Blythe, Kendra Colton, William Hite, Rufus Müller, Christòphen Nomura, Lucy Shelton, and Dawn Upshaw throughout North America, Europe and Japan. She has performed in venues including the Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center, Weill Recital Hall, Boston's Jordan Hall, Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood, the Kennedy Center, Tokyo's Yamaha Hall and the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. The Washington Post has called her a pianist "with unusual skill and sensitivity to the music and the singer" and the Boston Globe has praised her "virtuoso accompaniment ... super-saturated with gorgeous colors".

Iwama is the associate director of the Graduate Vocal Arts Program at Bard Conservatory, where she works in tandem with the artistic director, the renowned mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe. In addition, she has given master classes and served as guest faculty at academic institutions in Asia and the United States, and has been invited to adjudicate at major competitions such as Young Concert Artists. She has been a faculty member at Songfest, as well as a participant of the Ravinia, Ojai, Token Creek and the Aldeburgh music festivals among others. From 1995-2016 she taught at the Tanglewood Music Center, where she was also appointed to the position of coordinator of the Vocal Studies Program. This past year also included a residency with the Cincinnati Song Institute as the fellowship coach, and the Perform Opera in Italy program in Mercatello sul Metauro. A former resident of the Boston area, she was a frequent performer on WGBH radio, and performed with such groups as the Handel and Haydn Society and Emmanuel Music, and was pianist and music director of the critically acclaimed Cantata Singers Chamber Series. She has held positions at the Hartt School of Music, the New England Conservatory of Music and the Boston Conservatory, and is currently a faculty member of the Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts and the Chamber Music Program at the Juilliard School. For the past two seasons she has also served on the faculty of the Lindemann Young Artist Program at the Metropolitan Opera.