

# IF YOU BELIEVE – BIOS

## MARK CASSIUS



### SINGER & COMPOSER

With roots in Broadway, including *Ragtime*, *Shenandoah* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Mark Cassius is a musical force to be reckoned with. His experience extends closer to home in Toronto's entertainment district including the first Canadian Company and Tour of *Cats*, as well as *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat*, *Miss Saigon*, *Showboat* and *Sousatzka*. He has also worked with Drayton Entertainment

(*Damn Yankees*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Sweet Charity*, *Dance Legends*), D2 Entertainment (*Hollywood Sings*, *A Starbright Christmas*) and has many seasons under his belt at The Stratford and Shaw festivals. Mark was a member of the world-renowned a cappella quartet, *The Nylons*, and took his multi-faceted experience into adjudicating for the Kiwanis Music Festival, as well as educating as a performance instructor at The Randolph College for the Performing Arts.



## DONAVAN LENABAT

### PIANIST

A Toronto- based piano entertainer, choir and music director, Donavan Lenabat is also in high demand as an accompanist. Since the pandemic began and all regular musician work stopped, he has pivoted to providing free Live Streaming entertainment 3-5 times a week ([facebook.com/donavonsASG](https://www.facebook.com/donavonsASG)) and creating amazing virtual choir videos with his choir, Alt Vox (<http://altvox.ca>).

Donavon's vast repertoire, incredible musicianship, and sense of humour combine to provide an entertaining experience for all who check out his virtual shows.



# LAUREN MAYER

## SINGER/SONGWRITER

Lauren is an accomplished singer, songwriter, actor and full-time music educator- having graduated from Randolph College for the Performing Arts and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where she obtained her Masters Degree in Musical Theatre performance. She has appeared Toronto/GTA productions including Hedwig and the Angry Inch (Hart House Theatre) and The Haunting of Hungerford House (Tweed and Company Theatre). Lauren has begun seriously pursuing her original music in late 2017 and recently recorded and released her debut EP, *'Second Sight'*. The EP has dynamic vocals and haunting melodies and is an homage to the transformative years of her life (streaming on all music platforms).

Follow her on Instagram at [@laurenmayermusic](https://www.instagram.com/laurenmayermusic) for updates



# TASH RIOT

## SINGER & DRAG ARTIST

Tash is a trained singer, dancer, and actor, having graduated Queensland (Australia) Conservatorium of Music's prestigious Bachelor of Musical Theatre program before becoming one of Toronto's freshest talents in Drag. Tash got her start in Toronto at Crews & Tangos Drag Race 2018 – she now entertains all over Toronto and the GTA from West End haunts like The Beaver, The Gladstone—every Gay Village stage including Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, is part of “Clash of the Queens” drag brunch at Lula Lounge and has performed at Y&D main stage for Pride Toronto. You can always expect Tash to deliver high energy performances and witty banter - you know she's an absolute RIOT.



# SHAKEIL ROLLOCK

## DANCER & CHOREOGRAPHER

After years of independent and company work, now venturing into the world of Musical Theatre, Shakeil Rollock is an emerging dancer, choreographer, and dance instructor whose styles encompass urban, modern, ballet, contemporary and jazz. Most recently having finished contracts with The Grand Theatre's *Mary Poppins* – and currently working on a Disney Plus project alongside Emilio Dosal (*In the Heights*) and Ebony Williams (*Beyoncé*). A graduate of the School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Shakeil developed experience working alongside established artists with tenure in such productions as *Cirque Du Soleil* (Julie Perron & Debra Brown), the *Step-Up Franchise* (Draico), *Jully Black Entertainment* (Hollywood

Jade) and *Allen and Karen Kaeja* (Kaeja d'Dance). Having been fortunate enough to also work within the Afro-Contemporary Diaspora with *Esie Mensah Dance* and *Lua Sheyenne Dance Company*. Lastly, his love for dance extends performing; currently one of *Theatre Passe Muraille's* 2020 BUZZ Residency creators and *BCurrent's* 2020 resident artist. Check him out at: [www.shakeilrollock.com](http://www.shakeilrollock.com)



# DENISE WILLIAMS

## SOPRANO

Soprano Denise Williams is a versatile and veteran performer who is equally at home on the concert, opera and Broadway stages. Highlights of her performance career include most recently a concert performance in with the *Orquesta Sinfonica de Oriente* in Cuba, and in Toronto, *Walk Together Children - A Cross-Cultural Concert Celebration* (Black, Jewish, Muslim) at the *The Toronto Centre for the Arts*, now known as the *Meridian Arts Centre* (Fall 2018), the *Nathaniel Dett Chorale's* concert performance of *Treemonisha* at *Koerner Hall*, *Andrew Craig's King's Playlist* at the *Harbourfront centre's Fleck Dance Theatre* (2017), the cast of *Mirvish's* North American Premier of *The Sound of Music* at the *Princes of Wales Theatre* (2008-2010), and other notable solo performances. Her CD, *Walk Together Children*, is a cross-cultural initiative, featuring music from the roots of Black & Jewish music.

Denise has also been a long-standing voice teacher, adjudicator, and community music and integrated arts facilitator. She holds a masters in Community Music.

As the founding Artistic Director of *No Strings Theatre*, she is very pleased to be collaborating with these incredible artists on this inspiring presentation to hopefully enlighten your spirits this season.



## MARILYN HINTSA

In her post retirement career, Marilyn is an emerging leadership and retirement coach, and sometime writer and editor. Singing is just one of the performing arts she's participated in throughout her life but it's the one that stuck. She loves performing but is primarily an avid vocal student who's constantly amazed by what's possible, even as a mature singer, with consistent practice and a great teacher. Marilyn recently posted her first blog and is thrilled to have now produced her first singing video with the help of long-time friend and fellow early retiree, Richard Shallhorn. She's confident many wonderful "firsts" are yet to come and wants to thank all of her teachers and supporters.



## ANDREA MCLEAN

Andrea studied music performance at the University of Waterloo and studied with Denise Williams and Darry Jones Dennie at Voices of Colour Music towards completing the Royal Conservatory of Music designations in voice. She sang with various choirs in the past including the University of Waterloo Chamber Choir and the Common Thread Community Chorus in Toronto and in solo performances for initiatives like Art and Soul in London, Ontario. A highlight of Andrea's teenage years is singing in the studio with Tina Turner.

Andrea is training to be a Montessori primary teacher. She is committed to working toward social transformation through arts and education.



## DARYL WILLIAMS

--Born in Toronto Canada of Antiguan heritage.

--Studied music at Trinity College Choir School in Port Hope and Jarvis Collegiate

--Was first introduced to learning the steelpan in Antigua & Barbuda WI at age 11.

--Continued with the steelpan from 2005 after associating with the Treble Clef Music School and Pan Fantasy Steelband.

--Started playing as a soloist from 2012.

--Plays a mixture of musical genres at weddings, birthday parties, fund raisers, picnics, music festivals, anniversaries.

--Performance locations include : Palais Royal, Pickering Town Center, Jambana, Madison Square Garden NY, Pickering Docks, CNE, Niagara Falls / St. Catherine Music Festival. Metro Convention Center, Ajax Convention Center, Woodbine Casino, Canada's Wonderland, The Distillery.

# NO STRINGS THEATRE ALUMNI



## TOMMY AMOROSO

Thomas Jay Amoroso has been a friend to No Strings for about 9 years now and currently works at the cheese boutique as he awaits the return of proper theatre.



## CAILAN BODNAR

Cailan Bodnar is a Toronto based performer who is currently studying in the Honours Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance Program at Sheridan College. She has been performing and singing for as long as she can remember. Cailan is very passionate about storytelling and how musical theatre has the power to change perspectives about the world around you!

Some of Cailan's favourite theatre credits include: Lizzy in Drama 101 (Toronto Fringe 2019), Katherine Plummer in Newsies (Bravo Academy), Wednesday in The Addams Family (Mainstage Theatre Company), Hope Harcourt in Anything Goes (Mainstage Theatre Company), Janet Van De Graaff in The Drowsy Chaperone (No Strings Theatre).



# STEFAN LAVERY

Born and raised in Toronto Ontario, Stefan has been involved with No Strings Theatre since 2012. He's also a 2014 graduate of Sheridan's Performing Arts Prep and 2016 grad of Randolph Academy. He would like to express his gratitude to be part of this performance during a time when art and music are even more crucial.



# SIERRA PHILBERT

Sierra Philbert is thrilled to once again be working with No Strings Theatre. Her last production with NST was *Little Shop of Horrors* where she played Crystal. Sierra currently attends Randolph College for the Performing Arts and will be graduating in the summer of 2021. Outside of theatre, she enjoys horseback riding and classic literature.



# EMI YASUO

Emi Yasuo is a Japanese actor in Toronto. She moved to Toronto to advance her career four years ago and the first theatre company she encountered was No Strings Theatre. There, she learned the fundamentals of North American Musical Theatre through their workshop. NST credits include, Keevy from "Liam the Musical", chorus in "150<sup>th</sup> Canada Day Anthem Performance" at Nathan Phillips Square, and a solo performance in "The Great Canadian Show Tune!". Alongside, with the support of Patrick Maubert and Denise Williams, she won 1<sup>st</sup> place in

the North York Music Festival for Musical Theatre Vocal. Emi recently graduated Randolph College for the Performing Arts and she is thrilled to continue her journey in this amazing Canadian theatre industry. Her other selected credits include Sister Act (LOT), Violet (Stage Partners), and Musical Concert with Sutton Foster.