

Soulpepper | **{her words}**
FESTIVAL

THE GUIDE TO BEING FABULOUS

BOOK & LYRICS BY SANDRA CALDWELL
MUSIC BY SANDRA CALDWELL & JAMES DOWER
ADDITIONAL MUSIC & LYRICS BY JOHN ALCORN
ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE BY MARILYN JAYE LEWIS



Illustrations: Gracia Lam Design: lightupthesky.ca

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Welcome to Her Words and the second show of the festival, the amazing Sandra Caldwell's *The Guide to Being Fabulous*. We are proud to have commissioned this play through our Six Women Writing program. Her magnetism as a performer is like none other and when she said she wanted to tell her story I was thrilled for Soulpepper audiences to hear it. I'm excited to share this play with you - my own journey with it has been such a meaningful one and you're about to encounter the wonderful life and voice of the indomitable Sandra Caldwell.

You might think you know Sandra already - you might have seen her as an actor in Toronto, on Broadway, in TV shows and movies. You might know her as a singer. You might know her as an activist. A trailblazer. She is all those things, but she is even more. From leaving home at 13 to the Moulin Rouge, from Balls in New York to starring in movies and TV shows - seemingly she's done it all. And along the way she's learned some lessons that she wants to share with you. She wants to be your guide - your guide to being fabulous.

We hope you enjoy the rest of our Her Words festival including Kat Sandler's *Wildwoman*, the fiercely funny story of Catherine de Medici and Raha Javanfar's *Sympathy for the Devil*, a concert that examines the history of music and its preoccupation with the Devil. Alongside these productions, Her Words features panels, conversations, workshop presentations and parties. We hope to see you again.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Weyni Mengesha'.

WEYNI MENGESHA

Soulpepper Artistic Director and
The Guide to Being Fabulous Director



Ten years ago, when I first started writing this show about my life – back when I called it *The Harlem Guide to Being* – I felt like I was just coming out of a most extraordinary coma. I knew the life I had lived until then. I remembered all of it – the successes and the wild defeats – but it came to my attention that my friends and colleagues did not know the real me at all. The Harlem Guide to Being got a lot of the facts about me out there, finally, but a whole lot of the truth was missing.

The next incarnation – *The Guide to Being Fabulous After You've Skinned Your Knee* – did a better job of nailing down more of the nitty gritty facts, the life of Sandra Caldwell, the Va-Va-Voom girl. But the truth of my life was still shying away from the page. Until I got the lead role in an Off-Broadway play called *Charm*, when I finally came out as trans – in the New York Times, of all places – and the hard cold truth of my life led to two more versions of the show: *Hiding in Plain Sight* and then *Stealth*.

Wrapping my head around being truly out – after decades of being on the stage, in the movies, and on TV – and how those same friends and colleagues adjusted to who Sandra Caldwell really was... Well, that led me to focus more on how a life lived in stealth had taken repeated tolls on me, but it left out all those facts of my life that had been really fabulous!

And so now, here we are, at last. Welcome to my life! The facts, the truth, the challenges, and the joy, and finally a title that suits it all: *The Guide to Being Fabulous*. My journey to the truth has been a long road, but there are no regrets. No sir. I still remember it all and I wouldn't change a single thing.

I want to thank the folks that came in along the way and helped me create this Guide – James Dower, John Alcorn, and Marilyn Jaye Lewis. Special love goes to Carol Amirault – my rock; you got me through it all. And to Alicia Jeffery – you held up the banner and moved me to the next step. For all this, I am truly grateful.

Sandra Caldwell

Creator and Star of
The Guide to Being Fabulous

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Cast

Sandra Caldwell
As Herself

Tiffany Deriveau
Joann & Others

Miss Niki Nikita
Romy Haag & Others

Band

Michael Shand
Piano Conductor & Music Director

Jen Benton
Bass

Kobèna Aquaa-Harrison
Guitar & Percussion

Wilson Laurencin
Drums

Creative Team

Sandra Caldwell
Creator

Anahita Dehbonehie
Set Designer

Robert Harding
Stage Manager

Weyni Mengesha
Director

Ming Wong
Costume Designer

Madison Kalbhenn
Assistant Stage Manager

Michael Shand
Piano Conductor & Music Director

Michelle Ramsay
Lighting Designer

Mel Hague
Dramturge

Rodney Diverlus
Choreographer

Thomas Ryder Payne
Sound Designer

Matthew "Snoopy" Cuff
Movement Coach/Consultant (Vogue)
Dainty Smith
Movement Coach/Consultant (Burlesque)
Legendary Twysted Miyake-Mugler
Ballroom MC

Tsholo Khalema
*Assistant Director

Frank Donato
Video and Projection Designer

Production

Gunes Agduk
Lighting Operator

Sylvia Defend
Cutter

Ellie Koffman
Head of Wardrobe

Chris Blanchenot
Scenic Painter

Andy DeVries
Head Carpenter

Brooke Logie
Dresser

Paul Boddum
Head Scenic

Erin Halls
Wardrobe Assistant

Lisa Nighswander
Head of Props

Greg Chambers
1st Props Builder/Buyer

Eli Jorgensen
Stitcher

Kalina Popova
Assistant Head of Wardrobe

Everett Dalingwater
Audio Mixer

Brian Kirn
Deck Audio

Jacqueline Robertson-Cull
Head of Wigs

*2022-2023 ThisGen Directing Fellow supported by Why Not Theatre

THE GUIDE TO BEING FABULOUS is a commission of Soulpepper's Six Women Writing Program supported by: BMO, Kevin & Roger Garland and Women Centre Stage.

Thank you to the following artists for their contributions to *THE GUIDE TO BEING FABULOUS*: Kimberly Colburn, Frank Cox-O'Connell, Shakura Dickson, Brandon Hackett, Joel Joseph, Erika Morey, and Chelsea Russell. Poster from the MCC Theater production of *CHARM* courtesy of MCC Theater and The Numad Group. Art director and designer: Ted Stephens III. Photographer: Joan Marcus.

The Guide to Being Fabulous

is generously supported by:

Salah Bachir and Jacob Yerex

Running Time:
90 minutes
No intermission



SANDRA CALDWELL is originally from Washington D.C, and her career extends throughout the whole of the arts community, with success in Theater, Film, Television, and Music, with renowned theater companies and orchestras around the world. Now with her series of one-woman show's *The Guide to Being Fabulous*, *In My Own Lane*, and, *Acoustically Yours*, all leading to what she calls her ultimate truth in story, *Hiding In Plain Sight*, she once again reinvents herself. In Toronto, Sandra was nominated for Canada's highest theater honor a Dora Mavor Moore Award, for her lead role as Phyllis, in Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies*. Sandra made her Broadway debut in the original company of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, at New York's Schubert Theater. She was absolutely delighted to be included in an Irving Berlin family sanctioned version of *Annie Get Your Gun* as Dolly Tate, directed by Canadian choreographer-director Donna Feore. *Coming Through Slaughter*, directed by Richard Rose. *Anything That Moves* written by Ann-Marie MacDonald. But the defining moment, thus far, must include Sandra's portrayal of Darlene Andrews, an outspoken trans advocate based on Miss Gloria Allen, in the groundbreaking production of "Charm" for New York's MCC Theater Company. It changed the whole direction of her career. Other theater credits include *Beehive* Leader Of The Pack," *Comedy Of Errors*" with the Play on Shakespeare festival New York and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, as the irrepressible Magenta.



KOBÈNA AQUAA-HARRISON is an accomplished Ghanaian-Bermudian performer, producer, composer and storyteller. His prolific artistry has garnered several Dora, Juno, Chalmers Foundation and other awards for his work in music, media, film, television, dance and theatre. Clients include FIFA, CBC, Nissan, Soulpepper, Shaw, Stratford Festival, Montana Steele, arts councils and many institutions. Kobè performs internationally for presidents to pre-schoolers, on electric and acoustic instruments designed and built by himself. The eclectic rhythms of his trademark, "afrosonic jollof" is, "The sound when jazz, rock, reggae, hip hop come face to face with their ancestors." Kobè leads the all-star, *Djungle Bouti Orchestra*, with members hailing from Trinidad to Tanzania, Algeria to S. Africa. Their "Djazz 2.1.4" album was acclaimed "an audio decoding of African DNA" and nominated for a Toronto Independent Music Award.



JEN BENTON is an electric and upright bass player from Waterdown, ON. She currently performs various albums throughout North America with *Classic Albums Live* as well as laying down the bottom end for many independent artists, her own cover bands and original punk-rock band *Back Alley Gospel*. She has performed in multiple highly acclaimed venues such as *Radio City Music*, *Red Rocks Amphitheatre*, the *MGM Grand*, *Rogers Centre*, as well as appearing on National television programs such as the *Craig Ferguson Show*, *Breakfast Television*, and *MTV's Total Request Live*. She graduated from *Mohawk College's Applied Music Program* and was awarded a full scholarship while attending *Victor Wooten's Bass/Nature Camp*.



ANAHITA DEHBONEHIE was born in Tehran and has been based in Toronto since 2013. SOULPEPPER 2023: English (Co-Director & Set Designer); The Guide to Being Fabulous (Set Designer). FOR SOULPEPPER: Design: Marat/Sade, Blood Wedding, The Dead, Soulpepper Concert Series. Assistant Director: Jesus Hopped the A Train. OTHER THEATRE: The Flick, Trojan Girls and the Outhouse of Atreus, Dr. Silver, TomorrowLove, The Tape Escape, Vitals (Outside the March), Chitra (The Shaw Festival), Jane Eyre (The Citadel Theatre), Hand to God, The Aliens (Coalmine Theatre) The Little Prince (Puzzle Piece), Take D Milk N’ah, Shove It Down My Throat (Pandemic Theatre) Bloom, The Lesson (Modern Time Theatre) FILM & TELEVISION: The Young Arsonists, The Players, Salome Learns to Dance, Spaceman. OTHER: Recipient of 2 Dora awards, 2 theatre critics awards. Graduate of the Soulpepper Academy, Concordia University and Calarts.



TIFFANY DERIVEAU was born in Windsor Ontario to her beautiful Indo-Guyanese mother and proud Afro-Haitian father. SOULPEPPER 2023: The Guide to Being Fabulous. FOR SOULPEPPER: ‘Da Kink In My Hair. OTHER THEATRE: Rock Of Ages (More Entertainment) Chicago (Stratford Festival) Mamma Mia! (Mirvish); Cookin’ At The Cookery (Canadian Stage); Hairspray (Charlottetown Festival) Little Shop. (Grand Theatre) Buddy; Jesus Christ Superstar; Hairspray; Hair; Soul Sistas.(Mayfield) Hairspray; Priscilla (Drayton). FILM/TV: CTV, Disney, MTV RECORDINGS: Background vocals – Rita McNeil, Saving Grace Album. DEDICATION: For Daniya and Adam. May you always follow your heart and be fabulous! Love Mom xo.



RODNEY DIVERLUS is a choreographer, dancer, multidisciplinary artist, and producer. They have worked in dance, theatre, film, television, and visual arts. Rodney is the recipient of the Canadian Stage Award for Direction and a Montreal English Theatre Award Nominee. SOULPEPPER 2023: The Guide to Being Fabulous. OTHER THEATRE: Blackout (Tableau D’Hôte), Nightmare Dream (IFT/Obsidian). DANCE/OPERA: Hadrian (Canadian Opera Company); Dérives (Bentway); Floreus (l’Organisme), Dinner is Servied (Toes for Dance), Fieldwork (Dietrich Group); Juliet & Romeo (Decidedly Jazz Danceworks/DJD), New Universe (DJD), Exit Strategies (Political Movement), Ziriguidum (DJD), Year of the Horse (DJD), Stolen People (Nuit Blanche) CHOREOGRAPHY: you,me,freedom (Atlantic Ballet); welcome, we’ve been waiting (Toronto Dance Theatre), in your eyes, the sparkle of gunpowder (Art Gallery of Ontario); burn, burned (Summerworks Festival), RUR Torrent of Light (Tapestry Opera), you,meet us (Toronto Metropolitan University), sagittarius, meet capricorn (Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre), vagabond,vakabon, et al. (Wind in Leaves/Citadel); FILM/ TELEVISION: Aftercare (TIFF), Just Short of Reality (Stratford), New Monuments (CBC/Canadian Stage/Luminato), Movement (CBC) Private Flowers (Fort York), Combat Hospital (Global/ABC), Dual Suspects (History).



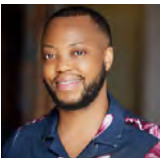
FRANK DONATO is a lighting and projection designer currently based in Toronto, ON. SOULPEPPER 2023: As a designer - Billie, Sarah, and Ella: Revolutionary Women in Jazz; Detroit: Music of the Motor City; Guide to Being Fabulous; ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS. OTHER THEATRE: Ride the Cyclone (Sudbury Theatre Centre), Orestes (Tarragon Theatre), Daisy (Great Canadian Theatre Company), Ways of Being (FOLDA/Kick and Push Festival), Let's Dance (Terra Bruce Productions). As an Assistant/ Associate Designer: Tell Tale Harbour (Confederation Centre), No Change in the Weather, Blindness (Mirvish), The Barber of Seville (Canadian Opera Company), The Neverending Story, Little Shop of Horrors (Stratford Festival), Out the Window (Luminato/The Theatre Centre). Frank is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada's production program.



ROBERT HARDING Born and raised in Lewisporte, NL. SOULPEPPER 2023: Stage Manager: The Guide to Being Fabulous, The Seagull. FOR SOULPEPPER: Production Stage Manager 2015 - 2019. Stage Manager credits include: Queen Goneril, King Lear, Pipeline, Draw Me Close, Almighty Voice and his Wife, Rose: A New Musical (2019), Bed and Breakfast, La Bête (2018), Waiting for Godot, Spoon River, Of Human Bondage (2017), It's a Wonderful Life, The 39 Steps, The Anger in Ernest and Ernestine (2016), Accidental Death of an Anarchist (2015). OTHER THEATRE: Treemonisha (Volcano Theatre), Things I Know to be True (Company Theatre / Mirvish), Once on this Island (Musical Stage/Obsidian), Clybourne Park, Stuff Happens (Studio 180/Mirvish Productions), The Best Brothers, Communion, A Beautiful View (Tarragon Theatre).



MADISON KALBHENN SOULPEPPER 2023: The Secret Chord: A Leonard Cohen Experience, The Guide to Being Fabulous. FOR SOULPEPPER: The Riverboat Coffee House (2019) OTHER THEATRE: Harry Potter and the Cursed Child (Mirvish Theatre), Little Women, I Am William, To Kill a Mockingbird (Stratford Festival), Idomeneo, Actéon and Pygmalion, The Marriage of Figaro (Opera Atelier), Julius Caesar, The Wedding Party (Crow's Theatre), Anne of Green Gables (Thousand Islands Playhouse). Script Supervisor for Ross Petty's A Christmas Carol, Production Assistant at the Stratford Festival and Stage Management Intern at Wicked (Broadway).



TSHOLO KHALEMA was born in the rich culture of South Africa. SOULPEPPER 2023: Assistant Director and dialect coach for Sizwe Banzi is Dead OTHER THEATRE: The First Stone (New Harlem Production - Toronto/ Ottawa), Lilies Or The Revival of a Romantic Drama (Lemontree Production) FILM & TELEVISION: Y The Last Man, Sort Of. OTHER: His artistic prowess extends beyond the stage, as Facilitator and creator of Vuka creation program at Theatre Passe Muraille. For updates information on his artistic journey checkout www.tsholovisions.com



WILSON LAURENCIN has worked with countless artists and on a wide array of projects. The following is a selection - artist & groups: Nelly Furtado, Rufus Wainwright, Boy George, Josh Groban, David Byrne, Andrew Lloyd Webber, A.R. Rahman, Philosopher Kings, Dave Koz, Richard Marx, Macy Gray, Marc Jordan, Warren Zevon, Angeliqe Kidjo, Burton Cummings, Paul Shaffer, Billy Ray Cyrus, Katharine McPhee, Natasha Bedingfield, Len, Alannah Myles, Les Nubians Television Shows (on air, house band) Canadian Screen Awards – CBC, Over The Rainbow - CBC Canadian Idol – CTV, Canada’s Walk of Fame - CTV Mike Bullard Show - Global TV Open Mike with Mike Bullard - CTV NHL Awards - TSN Gemini Awards – CBC Genie Awards – CBC.



WEYNI MENGESHA is the Artistic Director of Soulpepper Theatre Company and an award-winning director, known for her groundbreaking work and community engagement. Weyni has directed shows across Canada that have gone on to tour nationally and internationally, and have been developed into television shows playing on CBC, Global, and Netflix. She has also directed in London, New York, Los Angeles, garnering a NAACP nomination for Best Direction as well as Dora, Drama League, and Drama Critics Circle award nominations and awards for Outstanding Direction. She has been an instructor at Soulpepper Academy, the National Theatre School of Canada and the Canadian Film Centre and was Co-Artistic Director and teacher with A.M.Y Project for 7 years. In 2017, Weyni was named one of the Women In View’s “Five in Focus” identifying five rising film directors across Canada. She was recently named one of the 50 most influential people in Toronto by Toronto Life Magazine.



MISS NIKI NIKITA was born and raised in Windsor, ON. SOULPEPPER 2023: The Guide to Being Fabulous. OTHER THEATRE: Fertility (Light Echo Theatre); Nasty (Maelstrom Theatre); Richard III (Wolf Manor Theatre Collective). FILM & TELEVISION: Sweet As Sugar. The Middle. OTHER: Miss Niki is a graduate of Performance Acting at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). Dedicated to all of the fabulous women in her life — particularly Mama, Gramma, Tristen and Cora.



MICHELLE RAMSAY was born and raised in Prince George, B.C. SOULPEPPER 2023: The Guide to Being Fabulous. FOR SOULPEPPER: The Royale (Lighting Design); for coloured girls (Lighting Design). OTHER THEATRE: Prison Dancer (Citadel Theatre); Redbone Coonhound (Tarragon Theatre/Imago Theatre); Martyr (ARC); The First Stone (New Harlem); The Waltz (Factory Theatre); The Doctors Dilemma (Shaw Festival); A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Theatre Rusticle). OTHER: Michelle is a recipient of eight Dora Awards, the Pauline McGibbon Award, and was a finalist for the 2021 Siminovitch Prize.



THOMAS RYDER PAYNE SOULPEPPER 2023: The Guide to Being Fabulous. FOR SOULPEPPER: Sound Designer: Queen Goneril, King Lear. Sound Designer & Composer: The Brothers Size, Little Menace: Pinter Plays, The Royale, Oratorio: A Theatrical Mixtape, Orlando, Picture This, The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?, The Anger in Ernest and Ernestine, Incident at Vichy, Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts I, II, III), La Ronde, Kim’s Convenience, Ghosts. OTHER THEATRE: Designs for Stratford, Shaw, Mirvish, Canadian Stage, NAC, Theatre Calgary, GTC, Tarragon, BIBT, TPM, Factory, Volcano, Aluna, Modern Times and many others. OTHER: Thomas has received 4 Dora awards and 25 nominations.



MICHAEL SHAND is local to Toronto and has spent well over half his life playing music. He began piano lessons at the age of 13 and progressed quickly through the Royal Conservatory of Music’s classical system, completing grade ten after a span of only four years. However, like so many young players who define this unique generation, raised in an era of unprecedented musical diversity and accessibility, Michael exhibits a creative energy that encompasses many genres. Blues, reggae, hip-hop, funk, house, R and B, soul and Latin music are the raw elements that form his identity as a performer, writer and arranger, but jazz is the common thread that binds them all together. Shortly after leaving York University where he was the recipient of the coveted Oscar Peterson Scholarship Award, Michael became pianist and musical director for “Kollage”. He then went on to perform on countless stages across the world, with countless artists along the way. He has dazzled audiences in Hong Kong, Paris, Jakarta, Dubai, Amsterdam, London and throughout North America with such artists as Molly Johnson, Divine Brown, Gerald Eaton of the Philosopher Kings, Jully Black, Jacksoul and Kardinal, jazz-crooner Matt Dusk, Sean Jones & the Righteous Echo, and is currently musical director for Canadian Superstar, Johnny Reid.



MING WONG is a Toronto costume designer, stylist, and wardrobe technician. She has worked on a variety of projects ranging from dance, theatre, film, and television. **FOR SOULPEPPER:** The Guide to Being Fabulous, Sizwe Banzi is Dead, Alice in Wonderland and Pipeline. **OTHER THEATRE:** Is God Is, Canadian Stage/Obsidian/ Necessary Angel; Hamlet 911, Stratford Festival; Orphans for the Czar, Crow’s Theatre; Trouble in Mind, Shaw Festival; Hansel und Gretel, Canadian Opera Company; Julius Caesar, Crow’s Theatre/Groundling Theatre. **DIGITAL:** Alice in Winterland, Ross Petty Productions; New Monuments, Luminato/Canadian Stage; Savitri, Against the Grain; Alice in Wonderland, Bad Hats Theatre/Soulpepper. **OTHER:** Winner of the 2021 Virginia & Myrtle Cooper Award in Costume Design.

SONG LIST: THE GUIDE TO BEING FABULOUS

- UNTIL THEN** | Music by James Dower; Lyrics by Sandra Caldwell & James Dower
- BRAND NEW WORLD** | Music by James Dower; Lyrics by Sandra Caldwell & James Dower
- AVOIDANCE TANGO** | Music by James Dower; Lyrics by Sandra Caldwell & James Dower
- JOANN’S TIRADE** | Music by James Dower; Lyrics by Sandra Caldwell & James Dower
- IN MY NEW HOME** | Music by James Dower; Lyrics by Sandra Caldwell & James Dower
- CLUMSY** | Music by James Dower; Lyrics by Sandra Caldwell & James Dower
- STRIPEASE** | Music by James Dower; Lyrics by Sandra Caldwell & James Dower
- IT GOES HERE** | Music & Lyrics by John Alcorn
- I CAN BE** | Music by James Dower; Lyrics by Sandra Caldwell & James Dower
- LET’S TOAST TO LIFE** | Music & Lyrics by John Alcorn



Ballroom Commentary created and recorded by Legendary Twysted Miyake-Mugler.

Please note that the music featured The Guide to Being Fabulous is subject to change.

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If we have erred in the spelling, listing or omission of your name, please accept our sincerest apologies and contact us at 416 203 6264 x.145 or development@soulpepper.ca so we may correct our records for future publications.

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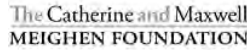
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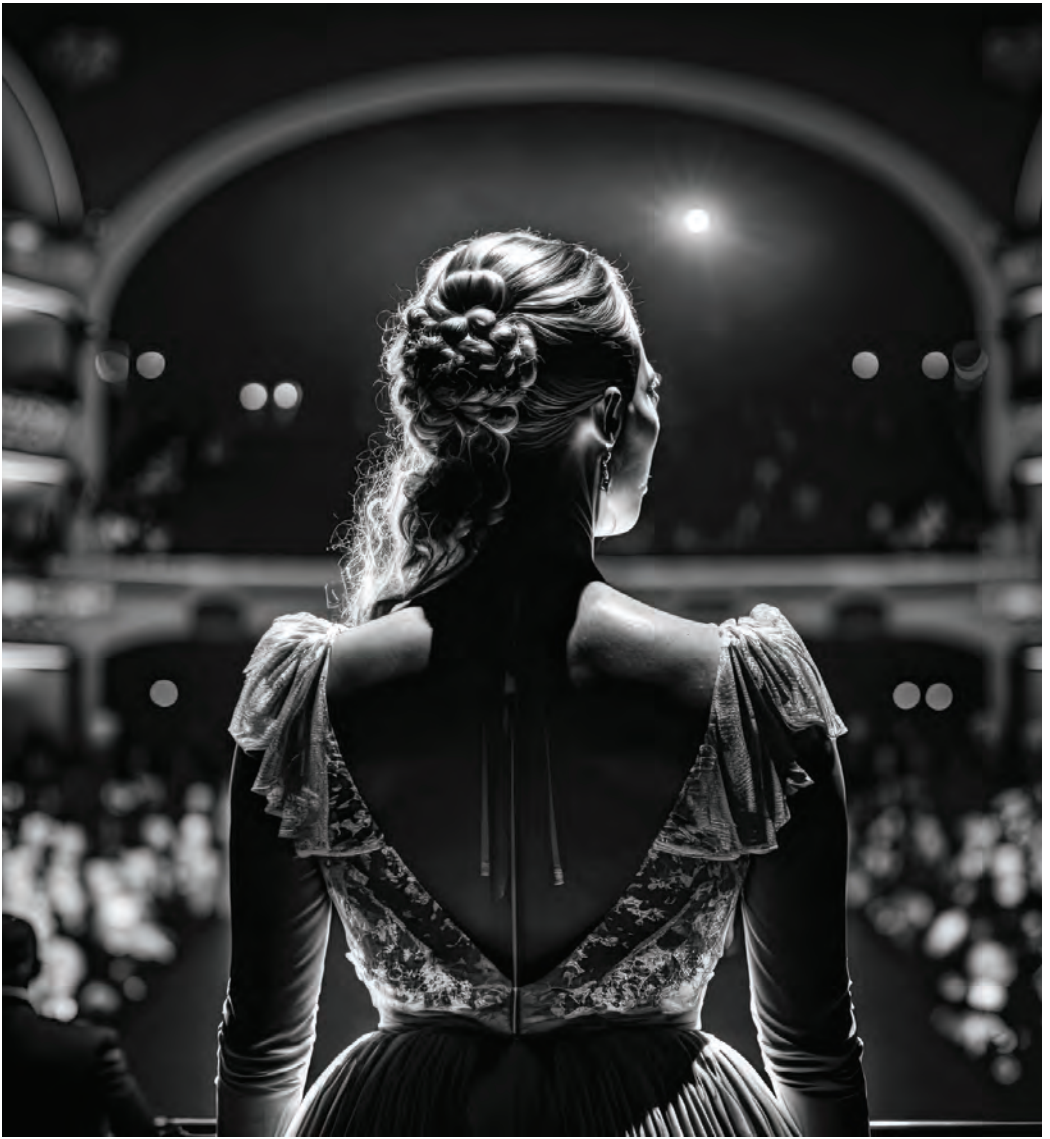
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