

Meet The Performers



Ralph Sanders

Ralph is the Owner/Director of OVATIONS Music Academy, The Woodlands, Texas. He is a professional Singer, Actor, Conductor, Director, and Educator. As a performer, Mr. Sanders made his professional singing debut as the Marchallin's Major-Domo in Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, with Houston Grand Opera. He sang many roles, including Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Nathanael in *Les Contes Hoffmann*, the title role in Britten's- *Peter Grimes*, Il Messagero in Verdi's- *Aida*, Enok Pratt in Carlisle Floyd's- *The Passion of Jonathon Wade*, The Officer and Bacchus in Strauss'- *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the Butler/Liebeslieder Singer in *My Fair Lady*, starring Frank Langella. Mr. Sanders performed Mascagni's- *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's- *I Pagliacci*, under the world-renowned Director, Francesca Zambello. Mr. Sanders was featured in Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and *Parsifal*, under the baton of Maestro Christoph Eschenbach. Ralph has shared the stage with internationally acclaimed artists such as, Placido Domingo, Giuseppe Giacomini, Denyce Graves, Marcello Giordani, Frank Langella, Rene Fleming, Karita Matilla, and Dame Eva Marton, to name a few.

He has recently been seen in Broadway Musicals in the roles of Harry Bright in *Mamma Mia*, Agatha Trunchbull in Roald Dahl's, *Matilda*, Joseph Pulitzer in *Newsies*, and the Wolfe in *Into the Woods*, where he was also the Music Director. He was nominated for Best Supporting Actor for his role as the Wolf, and for Best Music Director in *Into the Woods*, for Broadway World's Regional Awards. His acting credits include Rod in *Calendar Girls*. The General in *Gymnasium*, Sir Peter Teazle in Sheldon's, *The School for Scandal*, and Dr. Montague in F. Andrew Leslie's, *The Haunting of Hillhouse!* Mr. Sanders was also featured in Academy Sports and Outdoors' 2021 National Commercial Campaign.

As a Choral and Theatre Arts Director for 17 years, and conducted many of his award-winning choirs in the US, France, England, and across Italy, where his Chamber Choir sang mass at The Vatican for Pope John Paul II. His choirs have also sung in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Hatfield House, Chârtres Cathedral, and Westminster Abby, to name a few. Mr. Sanders has placed 38 students in the TPSMEA and TMEA Texas All-State Choirs.

As a Musical Theatre Director, Mr. Sanders has directed many Broadway musicals including: Disney's, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Frozen*, *Aladdin*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Sound of Music*, *The Wiz*, *Willy Wonka*, *Cinderella*, *The Polar Express*, and many more!

Ralph Sanders is in demand as a Private Instructor for Voice, Acting, Piano, Drums, Guitar, Opera, Musical Theatre, and Public Speaking. His students have gone on to study music and acting at prestigious schools such as, The Juilliard School, The Manhattan School of Music, New York University, The Curtis Institute of Music, Berkeley College of Music, and other colleges and universities around the country! He has had several students in the top 30 of American Idol and on The Voice.

Mr. Sanders was Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Winner, and received the Luciano Pavarotti Award! Mr. Sanders was a finalist in the National Lauritz Melchior Heldentenor Foundation Competition and performed in New York's Carnegie Hall. He received the Claus Nobel Prize for 'Educator of Distinction', and was a nominee for a Grammy Foundation Award for 'Excellence in Music.'





Emma Sanders

Emma started singing when she was just two years old. Growing up with two professional singers/musicians as parents, she was immersed in a world of music that carried her into her young adult years. Emma performed in multiple musical theatre productions at Playhouse 1960 at a young age and also studied voice, piano, and violin. Emma has been involved in choir since elementary school and was placed in the Klein Collins Varsity choir during her Freshman year of high school. She was also in the elite Vocal Ensemble at Klein Collins as a sophomore, junior and senior. Emma was the Vice President of Choir her senior year. She would like to thank her father and mother, Ralph and Valerie Sanders, for being her role models, not only in music but in life. She is very proud of her dad for following his dream of one day opening a music academy, as tonight, we celebrate that dream with the Grand Opening of Ovation Music Academy! Emma dedicates her performances tonight to her father, Ralph, and her late mother, Valerie Sanders, who will always be singing with her in spirit. As her mom would always say, "Love ya, mean it... Always." She hopes that you all enjoy tonight's concert!

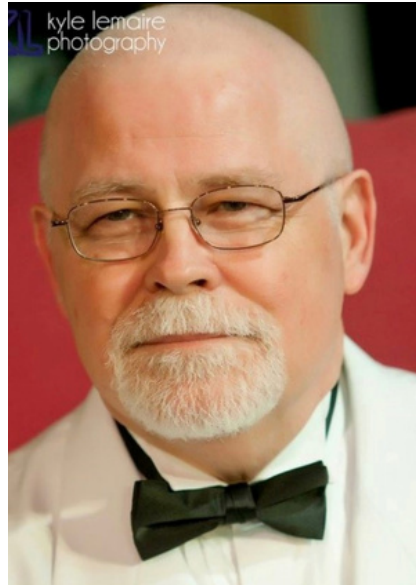




Kate Compton

Kate is thrilled to be returning to music performance after a long hiatus. Last year she began lessons with Ralph Sanders, and those lessons have been a highlight of her weeks. She studied voice in high school and college, where she performed in several school and community theatre productions. She sang with the Houston Symphony Chorus (1997-2003) and the Bach Society Choir (2004-2005), but then turned her musical direction to high-class lullabies while raising her four children, along with the occasional family wedding or funeral, and the opening ceremonies of Irish dance competitions. Now that her kids are growing up and she's able to pursue singing again, it's an honor to have joined forces with Ralph Sanders and Ovation Music Academy. You can also catch her singing with her youngest daughter, Maire, at the Revels Houston, this Christmas!





John Sallinger

John has been active in the theater scene in Houston since his relocation from Baton Rouge in 2017. He has been involved in theater since he was 20 years old at Theater Baton Rouge, appearing in roles such as Daddy Warbucks in *Annie*, King Pellinore in *Camelot*, Col. Pickering in *My Fair Lady*, Admiral Boom in *Mary Poppins*, and many more.

After moving to Houston John has appeared in shows at Stageworks, Stage Right in Conroe, Centre Stage in Kingwood, and Playhouse 1960, where he recently directed his third show, Neil Simon's *Plaza Suite*. In the upcoming 2023-24 he is directing the hilarious British farce, *Run for Your Wife*. His other directorial credits include Del Shores' *Sordid Lives* (2021) and *Shakespeare in Hollywood* (2022). John has been seen locally in such roles as Jean Shepherd in *A Christmas Story, the Musical* at Centre Stage, and Otto Frank in *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the Crighton for which he won a Montie Award for Best Actor in a Comedy/Drama. Other roles include, Freddie Filmore in *It's A Wonderful Life*, the Live Radio Show at Stageworks and the Mysterious Man in *Into the Woods*, Teddy Brewster in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, Mr. Anagnos in *The Miracle Worker* and Mr. Mushnik in *Little Shop of Horrors*, all at Playhouse 1960.





Sean K. Thompson

Sean, while known primarily as a director (Noises Off; Spamalot; Young Frankenstein; The Three Musketeers; The Buddy Holly Story; Kiss Me, Kate; Happy Days: The Musical; and tons and tons of Shakespeare amongst many, many others), he has been known to tread the boards from time to time. Favorite roles include Sigmund Freud (Freud's Last Session), John Adams and Ben Franklin (separate productions of 1776), King Louis (The Three Musketeers), Juror 3 (12 Angry Men), Greg (Sylvia), and The Man in the Chair (The Drowsy Chaperone). He is the artistic director for Points North Theatre Company and the producer and oftentimes director of The Woodlands Shakespeare Festival for the past eight years. By day he is a bestselling novelist, award-winning playwright and screenwriter, radio/TV host, news editor, and small business owner (c3memories.com).





Shon Sims II

Shon could not be more excited about sharing this moment with some of his old and new friends for this amazing night! A native of Little Rock, Arkansas, he became his journey into the world of performing arts as a member of Ballet Arkansas, making history as the company's first Black Fritz in the holiday favorite, (The Nutcracker). Some of his favorite roles include Alonzo (Cats), Jim (Big River), Audrey II (Little Shop), Toddy (Victor/Victoria), Cinderella's Prince (Into the Woods), and Sgt. Peterson (A Soldier's Play). Shon found his way onto the small screen as a principal dancer in the VH-1 Music Television biopic "Too Legit: The MC Hammer Story" and was the recipient of the 2020 Broadway.com Houston Regional "Dancer of the Decade" Award. A former member of the 20-time Drum Corps International World Champion, Concord Blue Devils of Concord, California, and a PROUD Razorback fan (WOOO PIG SOOIE!), Shon is thankful for the opportunity to use his experiences to create magical, memorable moments with Ralph and friends! It's gonna be a beautiful night!!!





Lindsey Steel

Lindsey is a professional stage and film actor and has performed throughout the Houston area. Favorite theatre credits include: *Mary Poppins* (Mary), *The King and I* (Anna), *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* (Mary), *Robin Hood* (Marian), *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Kitty), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helena). Favorite film Credits: *Ripple Cut* (Stacey) releasing Fall 2023 and *Bailey's Voice* (Yoga Instructor). Lindsey is represented by Pastorini-Bobsy Talent Agency and performs with The Dinner Detective Theatre, Books Alive Children's Theatre, and The Department of Wonder. When not performing, Lindsey is an ASL interpreter and teaches youth drama and dance. She thanks her family and friends for their endless love and support and gives all the glory to God. Col. 3:17.





Steven Providence

Steven is an educator, performer, multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, production producer, and founder of The Providence Music Studios LLC. As a student of Ralph Sanders, he was selected as a member of the elite Houston Grand Opera's H.S. Voice Studio. This University of Houston alumnus performed in *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart) *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Elmer Gandry* (Houston Premier), and *Catan's Florencia en el Amazonas* (Texas Premier). Steven has had the privilege to be the Executive Content Production Producer for The Houston Symphony.

Under his leadership the Houston Symphony's Summer Concert Series has flourished, attracting an ever-growing audience and garnering critical acclaim. The renowned Providence Jazz Ensemble of middle and high school students, under his direction, has a large Houston reputation playing for many delegates and venues in the community and city. The House of Blues, The Red Cat Jazz Festival, The Houston Police Department, The Black Heritage Music & Arts Festival, NFL's Souper Bowl of Caring, The County Commissioner's Office, The Mayor's Office, The Prairie View A&M Nurses Association, The Booker T. Washington's Alumni Association, WVUMC Houston Night of Jazz, Honey Brown Hope Foundation, The Children's Museum of Houston's Annual Martin Luther King Day Celebration event are a few to name, as well as many performances for Congressmen and women both locally and nationally! He has served with The Imani School and Garden Oaks Baptist Church. Mr. Providence lives in Sugarland, Texas and serves as the Children & Youth Worship Arts Director at The Community Faith Church in Houston.





Ashling DeGraaf

Ashling is ecstatic to perform alongside so many exceptional individuals in tonight's concert. She was a competitive Irish dancer for ten years before only recently being swept into the wonderful world of theatre. Her love for performance has taken her to new and unexpected heights as she is now pursuing her BFA in Theatre Performance from Baylor University where she just finished her freshman year! Although having been immersed in the theatre world for a relatively short time, Ashling has been blessed to step into the shoes of several characters who have each taken a piece of her heart with each story she's told. A few of her credits include: *The Sound of Music* (Maria Rainer), *The Little Mermaid* (Ariel), *Grease* (Patty Simcox, Sandy u/s), *Beauty and the Beast* (Babette), and *Once* (Featured Dancer, ensemble). She cannot wait to make some beautiful music tonight!





Ren MagDaleno

Ren welcomes you to this fantastic event this evening. He is a passionate performer that audiences will certainly love. Ren plans to attend SHSU this fall and study Biology as well as major in the BFA Musical Theatre program. Some of his credits include: (Prof. Bhaer) Little Women, (Enjolras) Les Miserables, (Prince Eric) The Little Mermaid, (Gaston) Beauty and the Beast, (Capt. Von Trapp) Sound of Music. He is incredibly thankful to all of his supporters and hopes you enjoy the show.





Eileen Compton

Eileen has been studying voice for 5 years with several teachers, including Ralph Sanders, Kara Koeller-Wood, and Andrea Luyties. Her community theatre debut was in *Les Miserables* at Playhouse 1960 in 2018, followed by several more Playhouse productions (*Annie*, *Little Women*, *Legally Blonde*, and *Matilda*). She also performed with Stageworks Theatre in *Taming of the Shrew* and *Sweeney Todd*. Eileen graduated this past spring from Klein High School, where she could be found on stage and in the costume room for numerous Klein Drama productions, including *Curtains* (Jessica Cranshaw), *Matilda* (Ensemble), *The Children's Hour* (Mrs. Mortar), and *Treasure Island* (Costume Designer). Eileen will soon be leaving for Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi, where she will be pursuing a degree in Theatre.





Victoria Rosario

Victoria, age 13, has been studying with Ralph for almost two years. Victoria started singing at age 4 but wanted to pursue music after watching "The Greatest Showman" and "Hamilton". Originally from the Bronx, NY, Victoria's family moved to Houston in November of 2021, where she began her journey in Musical Theatre. So far, Victoria has been cast as Princess Jasmine in Aladdin Jr., Princess Elsa in Frozen Jr., and most recently, Mrs. Potts in Beauty & The Beast Jr., in the short time she's been with Ralph. In June of 2023, Victoria won the National Yamaha Annual Concert Competition for best vocalist, where she led an ensemble and live band, singing an original piece called "Bright World", by Roman and Raikku Runes in Los Angeles, CA. Victoria is also part of the ensemble for Joyful Sound Choir for Home School Children, where they spread the Good News through music. When she's not singing, Victoria enjoys traveling, eating food, drawing, watching Anime, and hanging out with her friends and family.





Rick Veldhuijzen

Rick is a talented and charismatic 11-year-old boy, with a passion for singing and acting. With a wide vocal range and with the help of his teacher Mr. Ralph Sanders, Rick has the ability to bring any song to life. His vocal technique allows him to have the versatility to adapt to different genres and styles of music. His performances are filled with passion and authenticity, leaving a lasting impact on his audience. Rick is also a dedicated pianist. He studies piano with Mr. Ralph, which has allowed him to further explore his musicality! His impressive vocal abilities landed Rick in the world of theater. Rick was just eight years old when he landed his first role in a local production of *Janus and Stefa* (young Janus). Since then, he has been a part of several other notable productions, including *The Sound of Music* (Kurt) and *Aladdin* (Aladdin), with Ralph Sanders, Director! Outside the theater, Rick is a typical 11-year-old boy who enjoys spending time with his friends and family and has a huge love for Gaming. Rick hopes you enjoy this Grand Opening Concert for Ovarions Music Academy!





Reed Countryman

Reed is 10 years old and has studied vocals for the past year with his teacher Mr. Ralph Sanders. Under Mr. Ralph's direction, he starred as Olaf in Frozen Jr. and Lumiere in Beauty and the Beast Jr. Reed also studies piano with Mr. Ralph, and is turning out to be a natural pianist! Outside of theatre, Reed plays elite level soccer for club HTX and holds his Black Belt in Taekwondo. He often practices vocals in front of his beloved pets; Rosie, a French bulldog, and Luna, a sphinx cat. He's very much enjoyed preparing for tonight's show and hopes you enjoy it as well!





Isabella Pineda

Isabella was born in Tegucigalpa, Honduras on August 9th, 2011. She has a 9 year old brother, Jose, and they moved to Miami along with her parents in the fall of 2016. This is where she started her musical passion, impressing us all by singing “How Far I’ll Go” in her Kindergarten graduation ceremony. She also shared a passion for art and decided to develop that for a while but in 2021 after we had moved to The Woodlands she decided to pursue her musical passion again. Isabella has learned so much and developed her voice with the help of her wonderful teacher Ralph Sanders. Isabella also participated in the musical Beauty & the Beast this Spring and did wonderfully, she has discovered a love for musical theatre thanks to Ralph. She is currently a 7th grader in Creekside Park Junior High and will be participating in the choir as well as Athletics. She also enjoys tumbling in her free time and spending time with her baby cousin Ella.





Alaina Gregg

Alaina is 10 years old and started taking voice lessons in November of 2021. She has always had a love of singing. In the summer of 2022, Ralph Sanders started a musical theater camp and Alaina decided to try it out. Thus, began her love of musical theater. She started with the role of Iago in Aladdin Jr. and then the role of Anna in Frozen the Musical. She took a break from theater to play soccer, which is another love of hers. Alaina attended a camp through National Youth Theater (NYT), where she learned more about acting, singing, and dancing using songs from “The Greatest Showman”.





Tyler Gregg

Tyler is 12 years old and has been playing the piano since October 2021. He has always had an interest in playing the piano, but it wasn't until Ralph Sanders became his piano teacher that he really flourished. He likes Beethoven, but he also enjoys listening to other genres such as pop and rap. In addition to his love of music, Tyler loves sports. His favorite sport to play is basketball. Tyler looks forward to learning more from Ralph as he works with him at Ovations Music Academy.





Anthony Smith

Anthony was born in Atlanta, GA and lives in The Woodlands, TX. Now 13 years old and entering 8th grade, Anthony started playing piano at age 7 and he quickly gained a strong affinity and a natural love for piano. He has been studying piano with Ralph Sanders an almost a year! Inspired by the classics, in recent years he began to create his own original compositions and continues to develop a variety of fresh new works. He plays piano daily at home, plays percussion in the band at school and his hobbies include chess, tennis, and coding to develop games with his friends. He is excited to be part of this amazing concert for Ovations!





Olivia Polgar

Olivia is 7 years old! She has enjoyed studying piano with Mr. Ralph for over a year! Her favorite animal is a Guinea Pig! She loves reading the new Magic Mixies book and entertaining her friends and family! Her favorite song is the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Theme Song! Olivia lives the color pink on anything, especially her clothes. Her favorite subject in school is Math! Olivia wants to be “a Momma” when she grows up! She hopes you enjoy the concert!





Sterling Schulte

Sterling is 5 years old. His love of music began as a baby and he has been singing since he was two. He began working on voice and piano with Ralph just a few months ago. He also has a passion for trains, space, and mushroom identification. He enjoys outdoor adventures with his mom, dad, and dog Charlie.





Abigail Nobles

Abigail is 11 years old and lives in Willis, Texas. She is a kind soul who just loves to make people happy. She has always had a strong passion for singing and her faith, which she often expresses through her singing. Abigail studies Voice and Piano with Mr. Ralph Sanders, who was her mom's Choral Director at Westfield High School! She is very excited to be part of Ovation's Inaugural production of Roald Dahl's, Willy Wonka Jr.! Abigail is beyond grateful and excited for the opportunity to be a student at Ovation Music Academy. We would like to express our gratitude to the gracious donors who helped her be the first recipient of the "Valerie Sanders Music Scholarship" at OMA. Abigail vows to make you proud!





Bridget Compton

Bridget has been playing the violin since Kindergarten and has studied with Danette Schuh, Kathy Larsen, and Jane Kimmes. She is a senior at Klein High School, where she is a proud member of the Chamber and Symphony orchestras. She has also participated in Region Orchestra and Solo/Ensemble competitions while in middle school and high school. Bridget is beginning her twelfth year of performing and competing with the McTeggart Irish Dancers of South Texas, under the direction of Jennifer Hale. School, dancing, and violin keep her pretty busy, but she did venture onto the theatrical stage as Margot in Legally Blonde at Playhouse 1960 in the summer of 2019. Bridget looks forward to college next year (location TBD) where she plans to study Engineering.





Isabelle Nguyen

Isabelle started playing viola through the Klein ISD 5th grade Strings Program at age 10.

She previously studied under Amber Shah, and is currently studying under Dr. Lisa Burrell. She earned several outstanding and excellent ratings in Solo and Ensemble, as well as earning a 1 in State UIL when she was a sophomore. Additionally, she made Region 9 Symphony orchestra for 4 years in a row and was in the TMEA Area program in the 10th grade. She has been a part of the Klein High School Chamber Orchestra since she was in 9th grade, which got invited to play at the 2021 Midwest Clinic. She attended the annual Woodland Chamberfest Festival from 2020-22, and the 2023 AFA summer festival. Isabelle started playing piano at age 5 under the tutelage of her mother for 5 years and is at present studying under Dr. Jennifer Novak. She has won many awards at Cypress Creek Music Teachers Association (CCMTA) piano competitions and has won many medals for Texas Music Theory Exams. Currently, Isabelle is a member of the Klein High Criminal Justice Club and has won many awards with the group. She swims competitively with the United Swim Aquatics (USA). She is greatly interested in forensics and music and is considering either one to possibly be a career path for her future. She will be a junior in the upcoming school year.





Ethan Nguyen

Ethan has been playing the cello since 5th grade and has studied under Cora Neely, and currently Dr. Daniel Saenz. He will be a freshman at Klein High School. He was a member of the Krimmel Chamber Orchestra which is the 2023 National Grand Champions of the middle school division of the ASTA festival competition. He has participated in the Region 9 Symphony Orchestra since the 6th grade, as well as the Klein Solo and Ensemble competition. This past summer, he partook in the AFA summer festival where he also placed as a finalist in the AFA Concerto Competition. Ethan has also studied piano since he was 3, under his mother for 5 years, and currently studies under Dr. Jennifer Novak. Ethan has won many of the Cypress Creek Music Teachers Association (CCMTA) piano competitions. He has earned gold medals in the Texas Music Theory exams for 5 consecutive years. Ethan is an avid swimmer who is a member of United Swim Aquatics (USA), was a member of Krimmel's swim team, and will be a part of the Klein High Swim Team. In his free time, he enjoys practicing his instruments, playing video games, reading books, and watching Jeopardy. He is unsure of his career path but is considering Law or Music in the future.





Accompanist - Sara Myers

Sarah, a Houston native, has played piano for as long as she can remember. She earned a Bachelor of Music from Houston Baptist University and a Master of Music from Longy School of Music in Cambridge, MA, and has taught and performed in both the Boston and Houston areas. She currently teaches piano in the Sugarland area, as well as her private studio in Houston.

