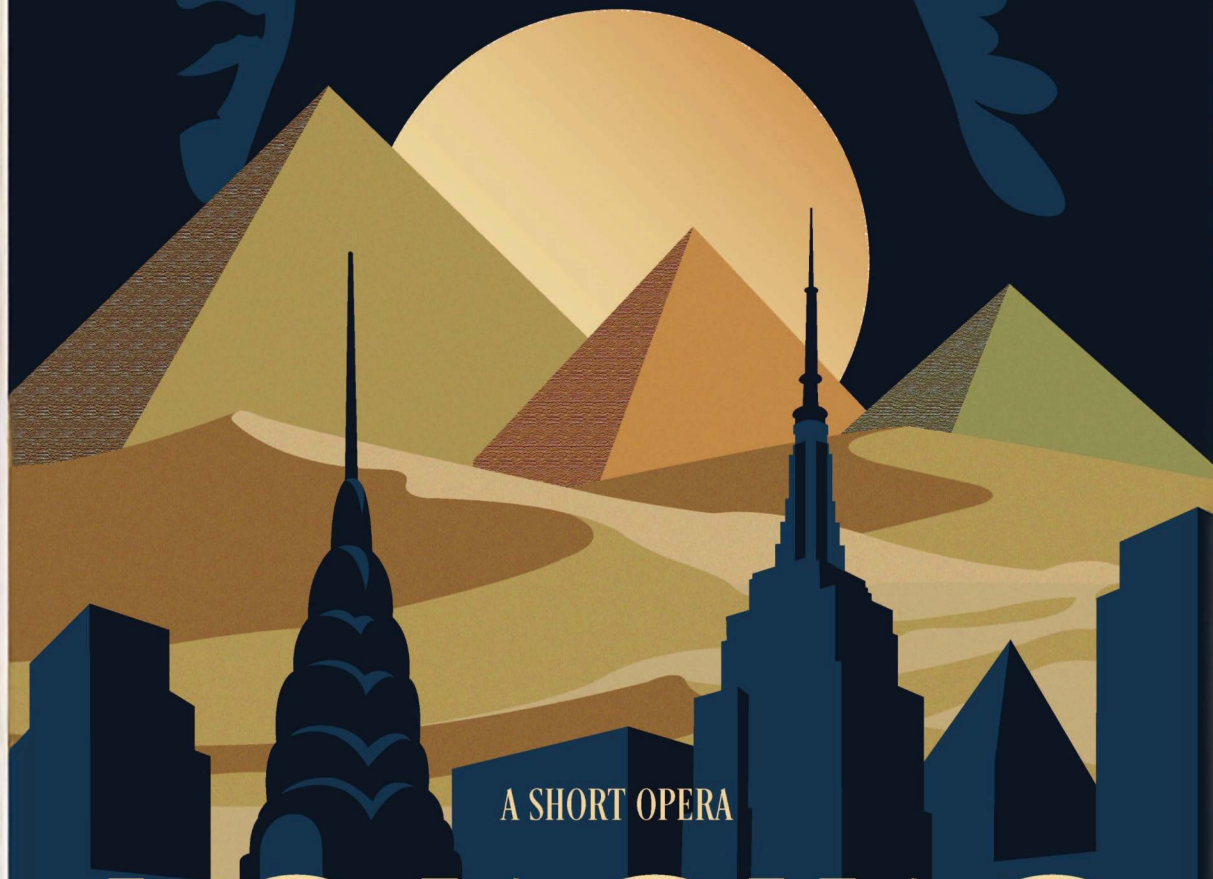


Original Cast Recording



A SHORT OPERA

LONGING

A LOVE ACROSS THE AGES

COMPOSER

Craig Brandwein

LIBRETTO

David Allan Sellers

Composer

Craig Brandwein earned degrees in Music Education and in Music Theory and Composition from Long Island University. He is an Emmy®-nominated producer and songwriter and a voting member of the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences. For over fifty years, Mr. Brandwein has composed and produced music for network television, corporate clients, various artists (such as the late Lynn Anderson), musical theater, and over twelve independent films. Some of Brandwein's recent and current projects include producing *The Secret Exit* and *Korean Tapestry*, and *These Distance Between Us* on Naxos Records.



Libretto

David Alan Sellers is a writer, living in Springville, Alabama with his wife and son, and he is a graduate of Troy University and the University of Louisville. He teaches composition and literature, where he won the 2024 Mayfield Teaching Award, and advises English, Philosophy, and Music majors at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. David has recently completed a novel and a collection of poetry, is revising another novel and a play, and has started research for a third novel.



Cast

Elise - Laura Melton, a Birmingham native from Helena, Alabama, began her singing journey at a young age, singing in choirs and taking voice lessons. She joined the University of Alabama at Birmingham's concert choir in 2018, studying classical and operatic repertoire under Dr. Won Cho. She participated in local competitions and master classes and sang with the Mountain Brook Baptist Choir. After earning her degree, Laura performed at the Assisi Music Festival in Italy, including recitals, master classes, and Italian Catholic masses. Now a registered nurse at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, she continues to enjoy singing opera in her free time.



The Forgotten Prince - Austin Green is from Brookwood, Alabama and is currently pursuing the M.S. in Music Education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He has served as a graduate Teaching Assistant for the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Concert Choir, Music Theory, and Music Fundamentals, been a cast member and Assistant Music Director with the University of Alabama at Birmingham Opera, and performed leading roles in Douglas Moore's *Gallantry*, Neil Weisensel's *Gisela in Her Bathtub*, and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. Austin is currently the President of the Student Chapter of American Choral Directors Association at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and teaches private voice and piano lessons with Mason Music. He won first place in the 2023 TBB category at the Alabama National Association of Teachers of Singing auditions.

Cast



Dr. Curtis - Christopher Blake Farley is a baritone from Morris, Alabama and a graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Mr. Farley is the latest winner of the Vann Vocal Institute's top prize and an engagement award from the Laffont Competition hosted by New York's Metropolitan Opera. Christopher's most recent appearances with Opera Huntsville in Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* as Count Carl Magnus Malcolm and as Guglielmo with Opera NEO in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in San Diego, California.

The Queen - Ashley Black is a coloratura soprano from Birmingham, Alabama. After earning her B. A. in Music from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, she continues instructing and performing in Northern California, where she resides. Ashley's stage experience includes The Mother in Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, in Opera Birmingham's production of *L'elisir d'amore*, *Romeo et Juliet*, and *Tosca*, as well as The Sacramento Master Singers and the 2016 Chinese New Year Gala in Birmingham, where she sang in Mandarin. Additionally, Miss Black lent their voice to the documentary *Lost in the Maze*. Currently, Ashley is working on her debut album of original music, set to be released in 2025.



Orchestrator



Nick Mathes is a 2021 graduate in Music Technology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. His accolades at the University of Alabama at Birmingham include the recipient of the Mosteller Voice Scholarship year and Outstanding Student awards in the University of Alabama at Birmingham Opera, Concert Choir, and Commercial Music Ensemble. His stage debut was in Stephen Paulus's *The Three Hermits* as Hermit #3 and was also cast as Ivan in Richard Wargo's *The Music Shop*. Nick has collaborated on orchestration and score editing projects with the University of Alabama at Birmingham's faculty, composed original music for chorus and solo repertoire, and been a studio vocalist for various artists. Nick currently works as the Assistant of Music and Fine Arts at Independent Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Conductor

Matthew Barron earned his B. S. in Music Education from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Since 2010, he has performed in pit orchestras with Red Mountain Theatre, Birmingham Festival Theatre, Terrific New Theatre, and Virginia Samford Theatre. Primarily a clarinetist, he is also proficient in flute and saxophone. His theatrical credits include *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Legally Blonde*, *Little Women*, *42nd Street*, *Grease*, *Les Misérables*, *Mary Poppins*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Color Purple*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *My Fair Lady*, *Cinderella*, and Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins*. Matthew serves as a woodwinds instructor for several high schools in the Greater Birmingham area.



In late 1920s New York City, Dr. Curtis and his daughter, Elise, prepare a new Egyptian exhibit of their recent excavation. There, the Forgotten Prince lies in his sarcophagus. In his life, he was cursed. The curse killed off his entire family, ending the dynasty. It also left him alive and trapped in his tomb for thousands of years. Since his discovery, he has watched in secret, learned the new language that he hears, and fallen in love with Elise. Guided the ghost of his mother, he will now reveal himself to Elise, so begins their love story. But the curse isn't finished with him yet....

SCENE ONE.

DR. CURTIS

You've watched all this for so long.
Your whole life, your whole life, all your friends
Have been parchments and dusty things,
Hieroglyphics and all that sings.
I could never love another
The way I loved your mother.
My heart retreated to ancient times.

DR. CURTIS

Neferkare, Horus, Hathor.

QUEEN

Neferkare, Horus, Hathor.

DR. CURTIS

I have watched you for so long,
Along the Nile, amid crane song,

QUEEN

Fords kicking up sand, burning fuel,
Digging up what the desert takes
Beneath the desert sun that bakes.

Riding camels, horses, and mules,
Riding camels, horses, and mules,

DR. CURTIS

I've watched you from the cradle of you
To cradle of us.
I have watched you play where dead kings lay,
Where Arabs sweat and Arabs pray.

DR. CURTIS

I have watched you as the only girl,
As if the only in the world.
You imagined mummies and Pharaohs,
Asps to the bosom and wars with arrows.
Where were your pretty dresses?
Tea parties? First kisses? Dances



Using copper mirrors when brushing your tresses.

BOTH

(Italics sung together, queen in parenthesis)

I've watched you all alone. You're a woman (man) now, your childhood gone.

But I would give up all we've found, (all that's around).

In that temple, in the mound, To be with your mom, my love (For you have lived your life)

We sat atop pyramids and stared at stars, Constellations (the moon, and Mars).

What's worth living without a life.

Set free your scarab and bone heart.

Trust it to the basket and the river.

Love to be loved. Love is a giver.

ELISE

I have watched you for so long,

Blowing away dust to an old love song.

An artifact and not a doll for a toy, I loved my youth as a tomboy.

We sat atop pyramids and stared at stars, The moon, and Mars.

I would never want another life. I was raised on adventure and the mind.

ELISE

Father, I've watched you watch me.

With a gaze so sad to see

You wanted, you wanted,

You wanted something different for me.

Let me see you smile like we did along the Nile.

Entomb the fears that creep in as old age nears.

You have watched me for so long.

You should know, you should know, you should know,

You've done nothing wrong.

Take solace from all doubt.

ELISE

There's nothing I've missed out.

DR. CURTIS

I want to watch you the rest of my days

DR. CURTIS

Enshrined in love's many ways. I
just want what's best for you.

ELISE

But that's whatever I decide to do.
When you are old, I'll take care of you.

DR. CURTIS

But you shouldn't have to.

ELISE

Go to sleep

DR. CURTIS

Why is this where you wish to be with your old father?
You should not have to care for me.

ELISE

Father, go to sleep...Shh...
This is where I want to be.
I hope you see that nobody has cursed me.

DR. CURTIS

This is where you want to be?
I do not see, darling, that nobody has
cursed you.

ELISE

I have watched you for so long, From
when we found you and ever since. We
passed by you a thousand times. It's not
our fault but your secret vault, And there
lay the forgotten prince, Handsome,
beloved and cursed to die. The grief
stricken king forsook the gods, Erased all
reminders from his eye, Died from the
sorrow, the last of his line.

ELISE

But I've dreamt of you for so long.

ELISE

But I've been with you all alone.
Fossils embedded in stone.



ELISE

I have loved you all so long.

QUEEN

My son, you've waited for so long....

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I have watched you for so long,

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Since I felt the earth open above.

I held my breath, too afraid to be brave.

Her voice was the first I heard.

I could still hear, I couldn't understand a single word.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Thousands of years of endless nights,

QUEEN

Thousand of years and endless nights....

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

To asleep you slowly went, I

stood guard outside your tent.

I memorized your face,

Studied the language of your race,

Admired all of your grace.

I couldn't tell you I was alive.

I don't know how I had survived.

All I had known was far past,

So few memories had last.

I had been along for so long.

I was rediscovered by you,

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

And now the whole world starts anew.

QUEEN

Your entire world starts a new, my son.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I've wanted to talk to you for so long,

When I did not know what to say.

By truck to port, you beside me all the way.

As we sailed without sails in an iron boat,

You spoke to me for hours in stowage.



By the moon, I dressed in a crew man's suit,
 Roamed the ship and watched over you.
 I have loved you for so long....

SCENE TWO

ELISE

I will unbind.
 I will unwrap your mouth so you may speak,
 So you may speak.
 And tell about the time of your birth,
 The time of Amun, the time of Ra, and the pyramid's peak,
 Peak of an empire now gone from the Earth,

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Unbind me. Take a look and see.
 It was my fault.

ELISE

Tell me all I do not know
 About a prince and a pharaoh.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

To nurse the heart's wounds that I inflicted
 And so I was restricted by a curse.
 While I was loved, I could not live, I could not
 And those who loved me could not live.

ELISE

The face of the most handsome gent....

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Ugly?

ELISE

Handsome.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Unbind me, unbind this cloth,
 But heed my pleas, heed the cost
 Beware what you may find underneath.



ELISE

Close my mouth, unwrap my heart
That flutters like the wings of a dove,
That shudders that maybe it could love.

ELISE

From a touch that made me start
To a caress that is so tender.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Lower your shield, and unleash your mind
From preconceptions, as I have mine.

BOTH

Each of us wishes to be loved.
It's almost all we think of.
Is there a romance? Could I/you play a part?
This steel shield, could you render?
If I uncage your soul, would you ensnare me/you?

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

This I shall be happy to prove.

BOTH

Oh love me and set me free!

DR. CURTIS

My girl is happy, and that I approve.
Time will show what you can prove.
You suffered a horrible curse
And found yourself improved.
To live without ever loving is a fate that's
worse.

QUEEN

My boy is happy, and that I approve.
Time will show what you can prove.
You suffered a horrible curse
And found yourself improved.
To live without ever loving is a fate that's
worse.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I do not remember dying
Or the sound of my mother crying.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Mother crying, mother crying....

QUEEN

I was crying. I was crying.

DR. CURTIS

Parents understand the force of their love.
We prepare you to face this life on your own.

When we live while you are gone,
It's a sorrow that gnaws on and on.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I awoke alone in the dark like a lifeless womb,
And then free of that coffin but still trapped in my tomb.
I defamed the girl who had cursed me,
The gods who listened and placed me in this cell,
With a fading echo of every self-righteous yell.
That echo what came after
Might as well been laughter.
When I finished bemoaning my situation,
I had to have a conversation with myself.
I saw what I had done.
Whispered apologies in the air
That no one would ever hear.

QUEEN

Your cure, the cost
Faded with the light of death

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Then all that was lost,
What my curse had cost,
Faded like the light at death.

ELISE

Your spirit bowed, but you weren't broken.

DR. CURTIS

You saw a life where you were free.

QUEEN

You saw a life where you were free.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I am not a god, I'm not a king. I'm just a man.

ELISE

I am more than just a woman:

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I am only a man, just a man.

ALL

We live, we die, but we can sing.

PRINCE & ELISE

'Tis time for us to live our lives.

SCENE THREE

ELISE

What is this?

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

You tell me.

ELISE

A Phaistos disc, a Spartan helmet.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

What is this I'm seeing?

A Model T, a biplane,

A zeppelin and an underground train.

ELISE

What is this I'm thinking?

I could be broke and nothing more,

BOTH

And as we enter these doors,

We return to this museum,

Where as a child I/you would play,

Slay dragons with a Roman sword,

Recited Herodotus' words.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

What is this I'm hearing?

Among comedy on the radio,

Blues, jazz, and all that can swing,

Gershwin, Armstrong, the music they sing.

BOTH

We shall sing along with every word,

All the music you've/I've never heard.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Is there something that you're fearing?



ELISE

But this is not my intent.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

What is it that your meant?

BOTH

What is this that I feel?
 What's the life we shall live?
 We can sail where whales dive,
 'Neath the stars in the sky,
 And embrace as they cry, yes, as they cry.
 Out of this place, out that door,
 All the wonders on the shore.
 The world I knew is gone.
 We can make our lives sing.
 We don't owe anything
 To men, to gods, or a king.
 I'll answer to you, and you to me,
 Hand in hand, we shall stand
 Back to back, heart in hand.
 Bring on the world!



THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

What is this?

ELISE

Am I dreaming?

BOTH

But now our dreams have changed.
 If we do not live freely then that is the only sin.

BOTH

When we are old and gray...

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I will love you til my dying day.
 Our home is where we shall stay.

ELISE

Our ship shall never wreck.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE
Gaze out from the deck.

BOTH
When we are....

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE
...old

ELISE
...We are...
When we...
When....

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE
When we are old....

SCENE FOUR

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE
What is, what is this world?
Where this love, this cherished love I found today
Is suddenly torn away?

QUEEN
My son, I fear this it is thy curse.
Yes, thy curse is to blame.

BOTH
Anyone that loves thee/me shall die.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE
Mother please....

QUEEN
And if that thou should love as well,

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE
Yes, I love her.

QUEEN

Then death shall claim thee both.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Mother, save me.

Can you save me from this hell?

QUEEN

There is nothing that I can do.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I pray, I plead, I beg of you,
 Ra, Zeus, Odin, Hathor,
 To every god, to all the gods I plea,
 Both large and small,
 To any who would listen,
 To all that heed my call,
 I ask, I ask only this:
 If her life, be spared,
 Then this shall I swear:
 I will do whatever you ask,
 Never grumble about any task.
 My life?
 O gods, let this be your will!

QUEEN

My son, if only they would

BOTH

save her from death.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

No, mother!
 Loving me is her only crime,
 And this shall be lost to the sands of time!
 If they will not lift this curse,
 If thy wrath requires worse,
 Let her sing with Isis!



DR. CURTIS

What has happened?
Why is she pale as the moonlight?
Losing color, losing life?

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I'll take her beneath the sand.
Shield my eyes in darkness eternal.
Lock my mind in anguish forever,
Tear out my heart, my soul you shall sever,
Carpet your palace with my skin.
End me and take all my body can give,
So that she may live.
I am on the reason for this!

DR. CURTIS

We should have left you buried in the sand.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Dear gods, yes I deserve this!

DR. CURTIS

This is all your fault!

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Yes, it's true....

DR. CURTIS

I'll end this curse myself.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Do what you must to break the curse that's on your daughter!
Maybe that will save her.

DR. CURTIS

I shall cut you down where you stand.
Feel my wrath!

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Unleash upon me your rage.
Let rain your grief, your pain.

DR. CURTIS

If it's hell you seek,
Let us go there!
Prepare yourself!

ELISE

Father, no!
I have watched you for so long....
Father mine.

DR. CURTIS

Precious treasure, daughter mine.

ELISE

My father dear, weep not for me,
I am living like you wanted.
I've loved my life,
Been loved ever since
I gave my heart to the forgotten prince.
This is the end. My body weakens.

QUEEN AND ELISE

Even of love endures,
Flesh will not last;
To the dust it is cast.

QUEEN

Go and hold her in thy arms,
Show her that she should not fear.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Fear not my dear, the dark,
Do not fear, in my broken tomb
Is this the beginning or the end?
There's no need for you to be brave.
I'll hold you closely in our grave.
Decay, old age will not touch your face.
Close your eyes and take my hand.



THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE AND
QUEEN

Death is never what it seems to be.

ALL

It is better we forgive, And
embrace this love,
Whether we lose or love,
Until we... Whether we
lose (or love)

ALL BUT ELISE

Until we die.

SCENE FIVE

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

The hour is late,
It's almost midnight.
Oh, mother.

QUEEN

I shall aid thee, my son.

DR. CURTIS

Have you been here all this time,
Bewitching spirit?

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

I'll hold you for eternity.

DR. CURTIS AND QUEEN

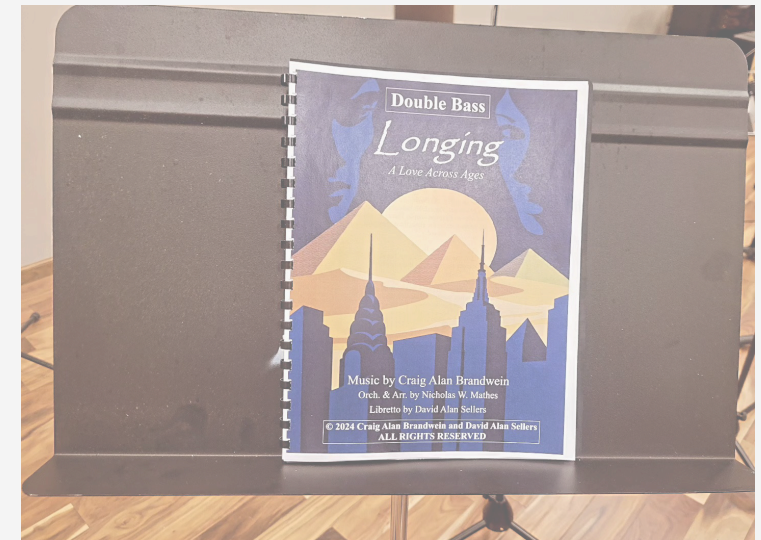
It is time to rest, my son.

ALL

This is where she's meant to be.
Within thy/my arms.

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCE

Within my arms.



DR. CURTIS AND QUEEN

Thou/I shall not forget her/your face.

QUEEN

Rest well, my son.

DR. CURTIS

We unearthed this grave,
It is more than my heart can bear.
It is lost to the darkness,
And I cannot follow there.
I'll retire for away,
Till my final days are over,
Arriving at the heavenly shore.

QUEEN

Thou hast known us for so long.
We are but spirits among Death's door.
Let flow your tears, Professor.
Because of Death, life is not less,
And with Death's hand,
He shan't oppress.
I'll watch over her.
She will not forget your face.
Their curse has been broken
Since they hath taken both their last breath
In life and in death, and forever in the next.
Go now be free.



Cast & Orchestra

Cast

Laura Melton	Elise
Austin Green	The Forgotten Prince
Christopher Farley	Dr. Curtis
Ashley Black	The Queen

Orchestra

Matthew Barron	Conductor
Greg Lucero	Flute I
Chrisdeena Jackson	Flute II
Emily Zhang	Oboe
Denise Gainey	Clarinet I
Lori Ardovino	Clarinet II
Kathy White	Bass Clarinet

James Baker
Brianna Tellis

French Horn I
French Horn II

Alec Jones
Tyler Joseph-Byrd
CJ Davis
Justin Belcher
Noah Boggan

Percussion II/Drum Set
Percussion I
Percussion I
Percussion II
Tympani

Zoe Willis

Piano

Serghei Tanas
Esther Roestan
Lucina Horner Crosby
Mary Del Gobbo
Sam Rocklin

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

Recording Credits

Craig Brandwein

Producer

James Bevelle

Engineer

Josh Ford

Assistant Engineer

Mixed & Mastered by James Bevelle & Craig Brandwein

Recorded at Audiostate 55, Woodlawn, Alabama

Cover design by Sydney Marlin

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