



Melissa Primavera, *Soprano*

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Local singer premieres music of exiled composer in Chicago

In partnership with [The Lahr von Leitis Academy and Archive](#), soprano Melissa Primavera will premiere **Healing a Fractured World: A portrait of exiled composer Egon Lustgarten** at PianoForte studios on October 9, 2024 at 7:00 PM. Egon Lustgarten (1887-1961), an Austrian composer of Jewish descent, was forced to emigrate to the United States after Hitler's annexation of Austria. *Healing a Fractured World* chronicles the composer's story of resolve to continue creating his music in the face of impossibly difficult circumstances. Tickets for the event are free but [reservations are required](#) as seating is limited.

Intolerance and antisemitism cultivated the conditions that led to Lustgarten's exile. Given the current geopolitical climate; including the crisis in the Middle East, antisemitism and other forms of hatred are on the rise. By educating audiences on the impacts the Nazi regime had on individuals such as Lustgarten and the criticality of combating hatred and antisemitism in all its forms, *Healing a Fractured World* promotes understanding through art.

The immersive experience begins with an overview of Lustgarten's life and the circumstances that led to his exile. Musical selections include works for piano and classical voice performed by soprano [Melissa Primavera](#) and pianist [Sarah Jenks](#). Narration by actor Fred Wellisch of diary entries and letters to Lustgarten's loved ones and colleagues are interspersed with the music while images of importance to the composer's story are displayed.

Melissa Primavera hopes sharing Lustgarten's story will prompt reflection on the stories of other exiled individuals, saying "While there are [thousands of asylum seekers currently in Chicago](#), they are each individuals making impossible sacrifices. In telling Lustgarten's story we hope to foster a sense of humanity while putting a face and a name to an individual emigrant."

About Elysium Between Two Continents

Founded in 1983, **Elysium Between Two Continents** is a nonprofit organization that fosters creative and educational exchange between the United States and Europe. Through art, Elysium fights against ignorance, discrimination, hatred, antisemitism, and forgetting or trivializing the Holocaust. Under the auspice of Elysium, The Lahr von Leitis Academy and Archive rediscovers and presents music and literature created by artists who were persecuted by the Nazis. Michael Lahr is the Artistic Director and Gregorij von Leitis is the Co-Founder and Honorary Artistic Director of Elysium Between Two Continents.

About Melissa Primavera

Soprano **Melissa Primavera** has sung over a dozen operatic roles in 4 languages. Of her performance as "Antonia" in *Tales of Hoffmann* Michael Caruso wrote, "She sang with dramatic intensity, impassioned lyricism and touching intimacy." Her performance of "Clotilde" in *Norma* at *St. Petersburg Opera* was hailed by *The Tampa Bay Times* as "excellent." Fluent in German, Melissa has performed concerts in Austria and Germany with *Elysium Between Two Continents*. She can be heard regularly in Chicago, bringing opera to non-traditional venues as a roster member of *Opera on Tap* and *Opera Inter Alia*. She has also sung the National Anthem at the *Bank of America Chicago Marathon* twice. Hear Melissa on YouTube [@melissaprimaverasoprano6377](https://www.youtube.com/@melissaprimaverasoprano6377)

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