



Joan Ellison

Cleveland Institute of Music
Joint Music Program – Voice Faculty

Joan Ellison has been praised for her "vocal prowess...[and] organic grasp of the classic songs" by Michael Feinstein, and described as bringing "a keen blend of vocal splendor and verbal crispness to every musical moment" and "possess[ing] a crystalline voice that never stops" (Donald Rosenberg, *The Plain Dealer*).

Her long-time immersion in the popular vocal styles of the 1920s to the 1960s includes transcribing over 250 piano and vocal arrangements note-for-note from classic recordings and copying/restoring missing pieces on several of Judy Garland's original orchestrations. This intimate understanding of vintage musical and vocal styles brings distinct freshness and authenticity to her interpretations of classic American standards.

To kick off the 2017-'18 season, her new one-woman theatre piece, *All Happiness, Judy Garland*, premiered to a sold-out audience at The Winter Park Playhouse (FL) in June. Upcoming season highlights include Garland tunes with the National Repertory Orchestra (CO), "A Magical Holiday Pops" with the Cleveland Pops Orchestra at Playhouse Square's Palace Theatre, "Get Happy! A Judy Garland Celebration" with the Enid Symphony Orchestra (OK), *A Judy Garland Radio Christmas in Rocky River* (OH), and performances of *All Happiness, Judy Garland* for the Holland Theatre and the Chagrin Arts Performing Arts Series (OH).

Last season, Joan made her NYC solo cabaret debut at Feinstein's/54 Below in *Get Happy! Judy Garland 1944-'54*, of which *Cabaret Scenes Magazine* wrote: "New York deserves to see and hear more of Joan Ellison." The show reprised at BLU Jazz+, The Bop Stop, and Nighttown. Other performances included a Sinatra & Garland Celebration with the Bemus Bay Pops Orchestra (NY), a "Swingin' Holiday" concert with the Canton Symphony, "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance" featuring Judy Garland songs with the Cleveland Pops Orchestra at Severance Hall, and an all-Garland concert with the Ohio Valley Symphony. January-February 2016 found her playing the role of Ms. Garland in the first U.S. professional regional production of *The Boy From Oz* at TheatreZone in Naples, FL.

In July 2015, Joan released a critically-acclaimed second album, "Retrophonic Gershwin," featuring her arrangements based on original recordings of the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. Recorded at Oberlin's Clonick Hall and mixed and mastered by Grammy-winning engineer Robert Friedrich, it also features singer Mark Flanders and duo-pianists.

Joan made her Cleveland Pops Orchestra debut at Severance Hall in 2005 and has since sung more than 30 concerts with the Pops, Erie Philharmonic, Wheaton Pops, Enid Symphony, Canton Symphony, Bemus Bay Pops, Tuscarawas Philharmonic, Lakeside Symphony, Ohio Valley Symphony, and others in repertoire ranging from *The King & I* to *Wicked*. In addition to touring the country with cabaret shows she co-created, *Love Finds Judy Garland* and *Gershwin On the Air*, Joan has played classic leading-lady roles in regional theatre, including Julie in *Carousel*, Nellie in *South Pacific*, Lizzie in *110 in the Shade*, Eliza in *My Fair Lady* (in concert), and Claudia in *Nine*. In 2010, Joan released her debut album, "A Date With Judy! Joan Ellison Sings Judy Garland."



She earned M.M.T. and B. Mus. (voice performance) degrees from Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Daune Mahy. Further studies in popular vocal styles were with Leon Thurman, and piano study with Robert McDonald and Sharyl Smith. In addition to her work at CIM, Joan is the Singing Teacher for the CWRU/Cleveland Play House M.F.A. Acting Program. Ms. Ellison's graduates have performed on Broadway, Off-Broadway, in London's West End, in national touring companies, in film and television, and with regional theatres, and can be heard on solo albums in pop, rock, folk, and country genres, as well as Broadway original cast albums. Past teaching appointments include the Oberlin and Baldwin Wallace Conservatories.

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