

# EASTMAN OPERA THEATRE

# CLICK!

Thursday, October 30, 2025 | 7:30 PM  
Saturday, November 1, 2025 | 7:30 PM  
Kilbourn Hall



University  
of Rochester  
Eastman School of Music

# CLICK!

*A WORLD PREMIERE*

MUSIC BY **STEVE BRAMSON**  
LIBRETTO BY **GAYLE HUDSON**

*CLICK!* had its workshop performance on May 18, 2025 at the Blue Gallery in New York City. Cori Ellison was the dramaturg.

*CLICK!* is made possible in part by the generous support of the Tulipán Foundation through its Art & Culture Award and the Friends of Eastman Opera.

The creators of *CLICK!* wish to thank Robert Gurbo and The André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation, Inc. for their support and permission to include photographs by André Kertész in performances of the opera.

*The production of **CLICK!** coincides with an exhibition at the George Eastman Museum in Rochester, NY:*

***“American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy”***

## ARTISTIC TEAM

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### *Artistic Director & Music Director*

Timothy Long

### *Stage Director*

Pat Diamond

### *Scenic Designer*

Kim Zhou

### *Costume Designer*

Nicole LaClair

### *Lighting Designer*

Andrew DG Hunt

### *Projection Designer*

John Horzen

### *Sound Designer*

Gregory Thompson

### *Props Designer*

Mary Reiser

### *Associate Projection Designer*

Ein Kim

### *Intimacy Director*

Lindsay Warren Baker

### *Assistant Conductor*

Nathaniel Peets

### *Assistant Projection Designer*

Jada Pinsley

## CAST

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**Thursday, October 30, 7:30 PM**

**Saturday, November 1, 7:30 PM**

**André Kertész, Older**

Elijah Gebers

**André Kertész, Younger**

Luke Honeck

**Elizabeth Salomon Kertész**

Jessica Kodsi

**Interviewer**

Madeleine Christopher

## COVERS

Owen Gavigan for **André Kertész, Older**

Liam Blecha for **André Kertész, Younger**

Sofia Martinez for **Elizabeth Salomon Kertész**

Mary Reins for **Interviewer**

## GRADUATE OPERA ASSISTANTS/PIANISTS

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Haniel Anugerah

Bolai Cao

Andrew Chen

Xi Huang

Chaeun Lee

# ORCHESTRA

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Timothy Long, conductor

*Violin*  
Ari Paris  
Kaitlyn McLaughlin  
Sofia Grimes

*Viola*  
Syara Robert  
Keon Sagara

*Cello*  
Zoe Hardel

*Bass*  
Benjamin Saunders

*Flute*  
Allison Schultz

*Oboe*  
Kayla Miller

*Clarinet and Bass Clarinet*  
Jay Kline

*Bassoon*  
Adrian Lau

*Horn*  
Danica Tuohy

*Trumpet*  
Jacob Hunkins

*Harp*  
Viviana Alfaro

*Percussion*  
Anais Griffith-Oh  
Myah Tokajer

*Piano*  
Haniel Anugerah

## PRODUCTION STAFF

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*Technical Director*  
Mark Houser

*Production Stage Manager*  
Josh Lau

*Assistant Stage Managers*  
Mariana Iguavita\*  
Amy Krutsch

*Properties Supervisor*  
Mary Reiser

*Union Steward*  
Steven Woznick

*Carpenters*  
Robert DiCandia  
Jose Maisonet  
Dylan Skwirba  
Steven Woznick

*Scenic Artist/Painter*  
Shelbie Colombo

*Assistant Scenic Painter*  
Katherine Duprey

*Costume Shop Supervisor*  
Megan Lancy

*Costume Construction*  
Leah Camilleri  
Naomi Chad\*

Claudette Hercules  
Andrea McGaugh  
Jessamyn Slon  
Elizabeth Wager  
Emma Wilansky\*

*Hair & Makeup*  
Leah Camilleri  
Megan Lancy  
Renee Proulx  
Jessamyn Slon

*Audio Mixer*  
Brandon Schmitt

*Head Electrician*  
Matthew Oliner

*Electricians*  
Brodie McPherson  
Logan Simpson

*Light Board Programmer*  
Katherine Duprey  
Justin Gommel

*A2*  
James Callahan-Stiles

*Light Board Operators*  
Katherine Duprey  
Brodie McPherson

*Wardrobe Run Crew*  
Shelbie Colombo  
Claudette Hercules  
Megan Lancy  
Andrea McGaugh  
Jessamyn Slon  
Elizabeth Wager

*Video & Production*  
Dylan Skwirba

*Kilbourn Hall Operations  
Manager*  
Deirdre Graves

*Director of Production*  
Pat Diamond

\*denotes student  
production assistants

## SETTING & SYNOPSIS

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**Duration: 75'**

### **NEW YORK CITY, MID-1980s:**

André Kertész walks the streets of New York. In his early eighties, he is unsteady. A prolific photographer, André has not taken a photo since the death of his wife, Elizabeth, in 1977. As he walks, an unseen, imagined journalist prods André about his life, work, and legacy. He feebly answers the questions. Agitated, he enters his apartment, slamming the door behind him. He calls to his wife for help answering the questions. She is nowhere to be found. With no response from her, he imagines himself before a theatre full of adoring fans, hungry for answers. (“THEY WANT TO KNOW”)

### **THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY:**

A woman, a young version of Elizabeth, appears and helps him remember his family life, childhood, and his early love of photography in Hungary. He becomes a younger version of himself as Elizabeth helps him reflect on his budding interest in photography and their early seeds of love as they got to know each other working at a bank. (“LIGHT / PERFECT” and “LIGHT / ART”)

The interviewer questions André with rising intensity. More grounded, André enters his darkroom, and, amidst its otherworldly glow, he tenderly reveals his profound connection to photography, the only language he truly embraces. The photograph in his developing tray, one of his earliest, takes shape. (“THIS IS HOW I TELL YOU”)

Elizabeth tells about his experiences as a soldier in the war and his thrilling leap to Paris to follow his passion. (“LIGHT / WAR” and “LIGHT / PARIS”) In Paris, André enters the vibrant art world of the 1920s, where he soon becomes instrumental in the arrival of photography as a new art form. At a popular café, he revels in receiving the endorsement and support of his new friends. (Reprise: “THIS IS HOW I TELL YOU”)

Years later, Elizabeth joins him in Paris, and they marry. She is an almost overbearing presence in his world. But, happy to be together again, his work thrives. His impetuous neediness is a curious match for her dominating nature. (“MARRIAGE I”)

## SETTING & SYNOPSIS

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### **1930'S EUROPE TO NEW YORK:**

As Jews, Elizabeth fears for their future as Europe tilts toward absurd authoritarianism. Both André's work and career reflect this tension, moving into a bold experimental phase. ("DISTORTIONS") The world is indeed changing. The signs are everywhere, Elizabeth notes and André senses. ("LIGHT / FADING") Elizabeth has decided it is imperative they leave Paris and head for New York. Europe is becoming increasingly dangerous for Jews and artists. André strongly resists her. ("MARRIAGE II")

### **NEW YORK 1940'S – 1960S:**

André and Elizabeth move to New York. As times passes, André remains frustrated as he flounders and navigates the daunting skyscrapers and closed professional doors. ("THIS CITY") Meanwhile, Elizabeth finds success earning her own income and satisfying her love of niceties as an entrepreneur, while frustrated but firm in her love for André and his work. ("NICE THINGS")

Miserable and entrapped for decades in the lifeless, commercial fashion and interior design world, André's creative genius is thwarted. (2nd Reprise: "THIS IS HOW I TELL YOU") His unhappiness grows and his marriage to Elizabeth is crumbling. Elizabeth is having none of his self-pity and remorse and they find themselves at a crossroads. ("MARRIAGE III") Sick with having sold himself out for the bulk of his career, André quits the commercial business scene and reinvigorates himself with the body of his work. ("HOUSE & GARDEN")

### **FRANCE 1960'S AND THE WORLD:**

Reworking his entire body of photography, André passionately and relentlessly dedicates himself to gaining the recognition he feels he deserves. He is transported to the French countryside unearthing a chest of his earliest photographs hidden from the Nazis by a friend. He is sweetly transported to his beloved Paris at a fresh solo show of his work. He is carried away to Venice where he receives the Venice Biennale Gold Prize. From New York Elizabeth directs and cheers him on, excitingly planting seeds for their permanent return to Paris. ("LA RÉUNION") The future is bright.

## SETTING & SYNOPSIS

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### 1980'S NEW YORK:

As all their dreams are finally coming to fruition, fate cruelly intervenes as Elizabeth dies within months of learning she has cancer. (“LIGHT / DARKNESS”) Without his muse and compass, André is crushingly alone, devastated, and speechless. (“MARRIAGE IV”)

We return to the same André at the beginning of the opera. He walks the streets of New York in a trench coat, a barely functioning 80-year-old-man. Lost and reclusive, he abandons his photography. On aimless walks through his neighborhood, he is repeatedly struck by and drawn to a compelling glass figurine in a store window that bears an uncanny resemblance to Elizabeth. He buys it. (“GLASS BUST STORY”)

The interviewer is again heard asking him questions. André listens deeply but offers no response. Returning to his apartment, his solitude and anger overwhelm him until the stars outside the window offer some ethereal comfort. (“THROUGH THE WINDOW”)

André becomes obsessed by the movement of light that passes through his New York apartment windows, the figurine, and the images it casts on the walls of his empty, lonely apartment. He picks up a Polaroid camera, a gift from a friend, neglected until now, to photograph the bust and cherished objects around the room. He is transformed, reconnecting with Elizabeth’s presence through the glass bust and his love once more. This rekindles his creative passion. A photograph of the glass bust gradually develops before André’s and the audience’s eyes. (“I’VE COME INSIDE / COME UP”)

The interviewer perseveres. André answers with real clarity now, basking at last in his long-awaited international acclaim though it’s bittersweetly realized in Elizabeth’s physical absence. He has found his voice again as his love of photography resurfaces and transforms him. “Click,” says André, is the potent chemistry between two people. “Click” is knowing the precisely perfect moment to take the photograph. And “Click” is the moment when everything you’ve worked for your whole life comes into focus. André turns upstage to face Elizabeth, her penetrating gaze with him forever.

## CREATORS' STATEMENTS

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### “Why André Kertész?”

André Kertész, regarded as “a poet with a camera,” is widely known as a pioneer of photography as an artform. As an amateur student of photography, I was familiar with his work and many of his most famous photographs. But it wasn't until recently that I discovered his wonderful later images in *The Polaroids*; bright and colorful, simple yet so full of life; an echo of his connection to life and humanity that he captured in his earlier black-and-white images.

I read the introduction by Robert Gurbo, curator of the Kertész catalogue, and was fascinated by a simple but compelling story: forces beyond his control drew André away from his dream of a life as an artist, taking him from his beloved Paris to a cold and harsh New York where he spent decades photographing for mid-century style magazines. Only as he entered his sixties did he begin to receive the accolades he deserved for his artistry. Yet just as he began to reconnect to his artistic self the unexpected death of his wife, Elizabeth, left him lost and bereft and seemed to all but snuff out his creative spirit.

Then two rather remarkable things happened: One day while on a walk through his neighborhood, André noticed a glass bust in a shop window; the contours of its form were remarkably like Elizabeth's. He bought the figurine and took it home to his apartment. Captivated by its shape and the way the light reflected and refracted through the glass figurine, he dug out a Polaroid camera that a friend had gifted him but that he had set aside and ignored. Placing the bust in various places around his apartment, he began to take photographs with the new camera, eventually finding other objects of fascination and photographing them as well. Little by little his energy returned. His creative spark reawakened; he went on to create this lovely final chapter to his life's work.

As a composer, I have spent the bulk of my creative life writing music in the service of telling stories. André's story struck me deeply and I was immediately compelled to find a way to tell it. I reached out to playwright Gayle Hudson and pitched the idea to her. After spending some time getting to know André and his work, she, too, found a connection to André's story and has written a beautiful and compelling libretto that captures perfectly the essence of André's life, his photography and the undying power of love and art.

— *Steve Bramson, 2023*

## CREATORS' STATEMENTS

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### “Why Elizabeth Kertész?”

Amid the powerful themes of artistic vision and immigration in Kertész's life, I am particularly struck and moved by his love for his wife, Elizabeth, and the fascinating challenges of their relationship. Much more than a quiet muse casting her spell from a safe corner, Elizabeth was a dominant influence on André, from adolescence in Hungary to her presence long after her untimely death. A very successful businesswoman, a lover of dance and the piano, an outspoken advisor in all aspects of André's life, she was not always liked by his friends. Was she a “monster?” An early feminist? Or the quintessential woman behind the frail male genius?

A myriad of strong and vastly different reactions are elicited by *CLICK!* These questions offer sharp reflections on today's society. I welcome them all. Through the retelling of Elizabeth and André's story, we see a love exemplified by two real people who were artists and dreamers to their core, true kindred souls who informed and inspired each other – in life and in death.

— Gayle Hudson

## MEET THE ARTISTS

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**Steve Bramson** is the award-winning composer of the musical *Shimmy* with lyricist Pamela Oland, conceived and created by famed choreographer Donald McKayle. Other works for voice include *Dream Rushes* for soprano, cello, guitar and percussion, *Rhymes For The Irreverent* for soprano and clarinet, and numerous songs and choral pieces for his work in film and television. His music has been called “imaginative and terrifically inventive”. Of his score to *Don McKay*, one reviewer says “Steve Bramson works masterfully..., (his score is) a virtual primer on the power of musical restraint...” His works have been performed on concert stages in London, Vienna, New York and Los Angeles.

Bramson is the Emmy™ award-winning composer of hundreds of primetime television episodes and numerous feature films. He scored ten consecutive seasons of the CBS Television Network's long-running series, *JAG*, and worked with George Lucas on one of the final episodes of his popular series *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*. He has also composed the music to many highly acclaimed independent feature films including *Don McKay*, *Decoding Annie Parker*, and *Last Call*, for which he won the award for Best Score at the 2021 BNC International Film Festival in Barcelona.

## MEET THE ARTISTS

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Known for his versatility and craftsmanship, Bramson was chosen to score the popular amusement ride, *From the Earth to the Moon*, written for the Disneyland Paris theme park; the first to feature a fully synchronized score.

Bramson has also contributed his talents as orchestrator to scores for now classic movies such as *Apollo 13* with James Horner, *James and the Giant Peach* with Randy Newman, and *Starship Troopers* with Basil Poledouris.

He received two Emmy™ award nominations for his work on *JAG*. Other television projects include music for *The Nine* and *Journeyman*.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, he studied composition and orchestration with Ludmilla Ulehla, Samuel Adler, and Syd Hodkinson.

[www.stevebramsonmusic.com](http://www.stevebramsonmusic.com)

**Gayle Hudson** was a Semi-Finalist in the 2019 Eugene O'Neil Theater Center National Playwrights Conference for her play *Ocean Park*. She is the creator of *Outloud and Heartbeats*, musicals conceived and written with young people and recognized composers from the Hudson Valley, NY. She wrote the book for *Winter Light* with composer and lyricist Bobbe Bramson. Gayle is the book writer for *Hans Brinker, or The Silver Skates* (music and lyrics Bobbe Bramson) which is represented by Dramatic Publishing. Her one-act play *Teddy Bear* was presented at MUNY Theater of St. Louis Backstage / Onstage series. Her short play *Repetition Compulsion* was a Gold Circle Finalist at the Samuel French One Act Festival. Full length *Little Creek* received staged readings by Spring Street Productions and Blue Horse Repertory. Gayle was Director of the Theater Divisions of Northern Westchester Center for the Arts, Mount Kisco, NY and Brooklyn College's Preparatory Center for the Performing Arts. She has performed with Berkshire Theater Festival, Boston's Chamber Rep, SeattleRep's Second Stage, Blueberry Pond Theater, Bluestone Actors Project, Summer Fun Theater and Blue Horse Repertory Company. Gayle is a member of the Dramatists Guild, American Alliance for Theater & Education and Actors Equity Association.

[www.gayleHUDSON.com](http://www.gayleHUDSON.com)

*Special Thank You to the University of Rochester International Theatre Program and Nazareth University Theatre & Dance Department for their support.*

## UPCOMING EASTMAN OPERA THEATRE EVENTS

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Tickets for all opera performances can be purchased at [EastmanTheatre.org](http://EastmanTheatre.org)

**EASTMAN OPERA THEATRE**

### **Impressions de Pelléas**

January 29 – February 1, 2026

Annex 804

Music by Claude Debussy and Marius Constant

**EASTMAN OPERA THEATRE**

### **Twenty-Four or, The Cure for Love**

February 5 – 8, 2026

Annex 804

Conceived and Arranged by Tony Boutté

Original Scenario and English dialogue by Tony Boutté & Chas Rader-Shieber

### ***Sparks & Wiry Cries presents: songSLAM Eastman***

Saturday, February 7, 2026 at 4:00 PM

Sproull Atrium at Miller Center

### **Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition**

Friday, February 20, 2026 at 7:30 PM

Kilbourn Hall

\*This event does not require tickets

**EASTMAN OPERA THEATRE**

### **Die Fledermaus**

April 9 – 12, 2026

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

Music by Johann Strauss II

Libretto by Karl Haffner and Richard Genée

*We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.*

## **TALK-BACK ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30**

There will be a talk-back immediately following the performance to discuss the production. This conversation will include composer Steve Bramson, librettist Gayle Hudson, stage director Pat Diamond, and music director Tim Long.



For the most up to date information on Eastman concerts and events, scan this code to visit our online calendar.



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of Rochester**  
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