

Rouge

"My French grandmother loved shoes and Edith Piaf records. While high heels never captivated me, the famous French chanteuse's music did. The orchestrations, though, were too big for me. I imagined a smaller ensemble that could bring an immediacy, an intimacy, that would allow for freedom to continually create with each performance.

As Rouge has evolved, I've learned by working with great, internationally touring musicians. In last few years, I feel extraordinarily lucky to have found exceptional musicians who not only play well, but are exceptional human-beings-- curious, kind and good-humored. We welcome you to the fun and beauty this creates! Bien venue!" ~ Elle

Vocalist-dancer Janet "Elle" Rayor founded Rouge. Her interactive style is influenced by her early careers in mime/mask, repertory theatre, and dance companies. Bilingual, she writes French lyrics for Rouge originals. Trained by Claude Caux, who with Marcel Marceau, started his l'Ecole de Mime, she debuted the comedy mime role for Seattle Opera's 2008 "Pagliacci" and toured nationally for 20 years as "Ellarella," a sought-after stilt dancer in her own fantastical animal & character costume designs. Her recordings have graced film and theatre, and she has co-arranged four Rouge albums, two produced by Grammy winner Garey Shelton. Interested in the cross between beauty and comedy, she toured her original pieces of physical comedy/dance/singing throughout Germany, Washington, Colorado won a Comedy in Performance scholarship, and was a touring Artist in Residence with Colorado Arts & Humanities.

Brandon Vance won the 2017 Scottish fiddling championship in Scotland and is a two-time U.S. Open National Scottish Fiddle Champion - the youngest to receive the award at age 14. With a B.M. & M.M. in Violin Performance from Cleveland Institute of Music, Vance has performed and taught internationally, serving as a guest lecturer at University of Limerick's Irish World Academy, as well as guest artist at William Kennedy Piping Festival in Armagh. He is a founding member of Celtic Ensemble Dr'os and World Music Ensemble Alchymeia. He plays classical and ethnic works with Pacific Music Works, Early Music Vancouver, Northwest Sinfonietta, John Reischman, Alex Fedoriouk, Eliot Grasso, and Rouge composer Stephen Rice. Vance's original composition "Gael Storm" for fiddle and orchestra had a world premiere with Cleveland Pops Orchestra at Severance Hall.

Accordionist Toby Hanson graduated magna cum laude from Seattle's Cornish College of the Arts with a BA in classical composition. His 2016 recording with the Smilin' Scandinavians, "Twenty Years," was nominated for Album of the Year by the National Polka Hall Of Fame in Cleveland, OH. He is also a 2018 inductee to the Northwest Western Swing Hall of Fame. He was music director of Terry Palasz's Off-Broadway one-woman show "The Polish Diva From Milwaukee" and has played for productions of "Fiddler on the Roof," "Cabaret" and "She Loves Me." He also plays with Smilin' Scandinavians, Valse Café Orchestra, Jangles, Cowgirl's Dream, and Bunny Holiday & the Highball Boys. Though he can fix a car, he prefers composing, recording, producing, and arranging.

Pianist/keyboardist Clayton Murray has performed in Japan, Australia, and even Enumclaw, Washington! A multi-instrumentalist, he also enjoys playing tuba, euphonium, and the tango squeeze-box, bandoneon. He has extensive experience in theatrical productions, has played in four Seattle orchestras, a Mexican banda, a Sousa band, and has accompanied many vocalists, instrumentalists, and choirs. He has performed professionally for over 30 years in styles including jazz, ragtime, latin, Broadway, pop and classical. Clayton, the newest Rouge member, has performed with Rouge 4.5 years, bringing new energy and joy!

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