

Presented at Carnegie Hall by
MidAmerica Productions, Inc.

1,487th Concert Worldwide, 1,151st in New York, 696th in Carnegie Hall

Peter Tiboris: Founder, General Director, and Music Director
John Rutter, CBE: Conductor Laureate

"To play a wrong note is insignificant, to play without passion is inexcusable." —From the letter of
Beethoven, 1825

Saturday, May 25, 2024 at 7 PM
Isaac Stern Auditorium / Ronald O. Perelman Stage

Ensemble Spotlight Series

El Camino College Symphony Orchestra, Torrance, CA
Assisted by the **New England Symphonic Ensemble**

GEORGES TOMB *UAV Overture (United Against Violence)*

Joanna Medawar Nacheff, Conductor

Sons of Thunder

DIEGO PAZ / *Solo a Ti*
SAMUEL TEJADA

ISRAEL AND *El Viene Ya*
SAMUEL TEJADA

Samuel Tejada, Conductor

Joanna Medawar Nacheff Singers

arr. **MOSES HOGAN** *I want Jesus to walk with me*

Sherdale Smith, Soloist | **Chris Craig**, Soloist

RICHARD *Total Praise*
SMALLWOOD

Trameka Richardson, Soloist | **Kenner Bailey**, Piano | **Sherdale Smith**, Conductor

arr. **HYO-WON WOO** *Arirang*

HeeJin Kim, Piano | **Soyun Kang**, Conductor

This evening's program is continued on the following pages.

Combined Choirs and Orchestra

WOLFGANG
AMADEUS MOZART

Mass in C Major, K. 317, “Coronation Mass”

- I. Kyrie (Soprano, Tenor, and Chorus)
- II. Gloria (Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Bass-Baritone, and Chorus)
- III. Credo (Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Bass-Baritone, and Chorus)
- IV. Sanctus (Chorus)
- V. Benedictus (Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Bass-Baritone, and Chorus)
- VI. Agnus Dei (Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Bass-Baritone, and Chorus)

Hanna Brammer, Soprano | **Lisa Marie Rogali**, Mezzo-Soprano
Dylan Davis, Tenor | **Kofi Hayford**, Bass

GEORGES TOMB *A Memorial Bow* (World Premiere)

Georges Tomb, Piano | **Joanna Medawar Nacheff**, Conductor

Participating Choruses

El Camino College Chorale, Torrance, CA (Joanna Medawar Nacheff, Director)
El Camino College Concert Choir, Torrance, CA (Joanna Medawar Nacheff, Director)
El Camino Women’s Chorus, Torrance, CA (Soyun Kang, Director)
Joanna Medawar Nacheff Singers, Torrance, CA (Joanna Medawar Nacheff, Director)
Peninsula Community Church Choir, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA (Joanna Medawar Nacheff, Director)
Sons of Thunder, Los Angeles, CA (Samuel Tejada, Director)

INTERMISSION

New England Symphonic Ensemble

Preston Hawes, Artistic Director and Concertmaster

MARK HAYES *Te Deum*

Amy Yekel, Mezzo-Soprano | **Jason Duika**, Baritone | **Sarah Pearson**, Conductor

ELAINE HAGENBERG *Illuminare*

- I. Splendor (Chorus)
- II. Caritas (Chorus)
- III. Nox (Chorus)
- IV. Munera pacis (Chorus and Tenor)
- V. Illuminare his (Chorus)

Dylan Davis, Tenor | **Andrew Roby**, Conductor

Participating Choruses

Carolina Choral Artists, Rocky Mount, NC (James Mauk, Director)
Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy, Chattanooga, TN (Sarah Pearson, Director)
Concert Choir of the Greenville Choral Society, Greenville, NC (Andrew Roby, Director)
Lakeside Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, NC (James Mauk, Director)
Pompton Lakes High School Choir, Pompton Lakes, NJ (Christopher Nappa, Director)

INTERMISSION

MARGARET BONDS

Ballad of the Brown King

- I. Of the Three Wise Men (Tenor and Chorus)
- II. They Brought Fine Gifts (Chorus)
- III. Sing Alleluia! (Chorus)
- IV. Mary had a Little Baby (Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, and Chorus)
- V. Now When Jesus Was Born (Tenor and Bass chorus)
- VI. Could He Have Been an Ethiopian?
(Mezzo-Soprano, Tenor, Baritone, and Chorus)
- VII. Oh Sing of the King Who Was Tall and Brown
(Soprano and Alto chorus)
- VIII. That was a Christmas Long Ago (Chorus)
- IX. Alleluia (Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, and Chorus)

Sarah Cooper, Soprano

Lucia Bradford, Mezzo-Soprano

Zabriel Rivers, Tenor

Fred Redd, Baritone

John Cantrell, Organ

James Kinchen, Jr., Conductor

TAYLOR SCOTT DAVIS *Magnificat*

- I. Magnificat anima mea (Chorus)
- II. Shall I Rejoice (Soprano and chorus)
- III. Et misericordia (Chorus)
- IV. Deposuit (Chorus)
- V. Gloria Patri (Soprano and Chorus)

Virginia Mims, Soprano

Jonathan Palant, Conductor

Participating Choruses

Credo Community Choir of Dallas, Dallas, TX (Jonathan Palant, Director)

Milwaukee Choristers, Milwaukee, WI (James Kinchen, Jr., Director)

St. Andrew Methodist Church Chancel Choir, Plano, TX (Taylor Scott Davis, Director)

The solo voice casting for this concert is managed by MidAmerica Productions' Associate General Director Eilana Lappalainen.

Please hold your applause until the end of multi-movement works.

Rodgers is the Official House Organ of Carnegie Hall.

The Program

ENSEMBLE SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Joanna Medawar Nachev, Conductor

This will be Joanna Medawar Nachev's seventh conducting appearance with MidAmerica Productions at Carnegie Hall. The concert is designed to feature many cultures and genres, including Gospel, Spirituals, Spanish Gospel, Korean folk music, orchestral premieres as well as the featured "Coronation Mass" of Mozart. It is through the "Universal Language of Music" that bridges of inclusion, tolerance, and peacebuilding can succeed.

At this performance, the El Camino College Symphony will be presented for the first time on the Carnegie Hall stage. The El Camino College Chorale, Concert Choir, Women's Chorus, Joanna Medawar Nachev Singers, and Sons of Thunder will join forces with the orchestra to share this multicultural and soulful concert.

A Memorial Bow by the award-winning composer, Georges Tomb, is a world premiere which Dr. Nachev commissioned for this concert. Georges Tomb will be giving his Carnegie Hall debut with a Memorial Day orchestral/choral tribute, as composer and pianist. Dr. Nachev's concert will also open with the orchestral overture *UAV (United Against Violence)* that Georges Tomb wrote in 2017 for the Middle East United Nations.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Mass in C Major, K. 317, "Coronation Mass"

Mozart was proud of this mass, and when he was in Munich in 1780 for the first performance of *Idomeneo*, he sent home for the music so that he could have the mass performed there. From his letters, we learn of performances in and around Vienna in 1781 and 1791, and there were probably others in between. Many bits of melody and turns of phrase in the Mass seem to foretell famous compositions that were still to be in his future, the most obvious being the *Agnus Dei* theme that is almost a pre-quotation (as it were) of the beautiful aria, "Dove sono" in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

—Program notes © Susan Halpern

MARK HAYES

Te Deum

Te Deum is Hayes' first large work for oratorio chorus, soloists and orchestra. Using the traditional text from the Book of Common Prayer, Protestant Episcopal Church in the US, Hayes has set this text in English

but also incorporates sections in Latin. Stylistically, this work reflects Hayes' classical training with expansive choral lines reminiscent of Brahms, modal chant-like sections, imitative writing, and a lyric fugal section that wonderfully expresses the closing phrases, "O Lord in Thee have I trusted; never let me be confounded." Hayes uses a rich dynamic palette, with sections that are boldly fully-voiced as well as whisper-soft and meditative. He incorporates a dynamism and energy through his use of driving ostinato in the orchestra and angular, rhythmic vocal lines.

ELAINE HAGENBERG

Illuminare

Illuminare is Elaine Hagenberg's first extended work, consisting of five movements for SATB chorus and chamber orchestra. Using lesser-known sacred Latin texts, the piece takes us through a season of beauty and goodness that has been disrupted by darkness and confusion. But as light gradually returns, hope is restored, illuminating our future, and guiding us in peace.

I. Splendor, Saint Ambrose (340–397)

Splendor of God's glory,
brings forth light from light,
light of light, light's living spring,
Day, all days illuminates.

II. Caritas, Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179)

Love abounds in all,
from the depths most excellent
to beyond the stars,
and loving toward all,
she has given the highest king
the kiss of peace.

III. Nox, Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (348–413)

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.
Night and darkness and fog,
confused world and turmoil.
Dark gloom tears the earth,
beats and stabs the sun.

IV. **Munera pacis**, Saint Gregory (540–604)

Behold, already night and shadows taper off
Light and dawn sparkle and quiver
We humbly beg the Lord through song
Our voices pray:
Though we are guilty, view us with compassion
Banish anguish, bestow health
Grant us everlasting goodness
Give us peace.
Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you:
not as the world giveth, give I to you.
Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

V. **Illuminare**, Canticle of Zechariah (Luke 1:68–79)

Illuminate those in darkness
and in the shadow of death are seated
direct our footpath in the way of peace.

MARGARET BONDS

The Ballad of the Brown King

Chicago native Margaret Bonds (1913–1972) had two ceilings to penetrate—race and gender. By the time of her death, her catalog of works testified to her unqualified success as an accomplished composer, though much of her oeuvre was neglected. In today's more enlightened season, more of Bonds' music is being heard. *Ballad of the Brown King* owes its exposure today to choral artist Malcolm J. Merriweather's edition and re-orchestration, which makes this little jewel available and accessible.

Ballad, which premiered in 1954 in New York City, was inspired by the New Testament Matthew narrative, which describes visitors—Wise Men, Sages, Kings, or Magi—who paid homage to young, though no longer infant, Jesus, bringing gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Tradition says that there were three of them and that one, Balthasar, was black or of dark complexion. Bonds' friend, celebrated Harlem Renaissance poet, Langston Hughes (1901–1967), was her librettist. *Ballad* premiered in 1954 in New York City. A revised version, debuted in New York City in December of 1960 dedicated to another "King"—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was present for that performance. Bonds' style is Neo-romantic with decided nods to an African-American aesthetic, quite appropriate for one who was so deeply rooted in the ethics and aesthetic of the Harlem Renaissance. We hear various influences: Bonds' early teacher, Chicago composer, Florence Price; Black church sensibilities, both in terms of stylistic nods and utility; jazz band music that was profuse in Harlem; blues and, even, calypso.

—Program notes © James Kinchen, Jr., 2024

TAYLOR SCOTT DAVIS

Magnificat

The *Magnificat* text holds deep historical significance, and it appears customary for each composer to seize the opportunity to articulate their interpretation. Within this rich tapestry of narrative, Taylor Scott Davis contemplated whether it was conceivable to encapsulate Mary's journey from an ordinary teenager to God's chosen vessel in five movements, navigating through a myriad of emotions. As Davis delved into the text, his interpretation unfolded: "Magnificat anima mea" resonating with joy, honor, and bewilderment. Commencing with a child-like exclamation, the composition gradually transitions to a warm melody, highlighting God's regard for Mary's humble stature. Amidst murky sections emphasizing the feminine essence of "anima," stately chords underscore the magnitude of God's work through Mary. To infuse a contemporary perspective, Davis enlisted Dr. Terry York to pen a new text, weaving a narrative that uniquely channels Mary's intuition, foretelling the trials awaiting her son. Each movement, from the solo violin embodying Mary's uncertainty to the choir's proclamation of God's strength, portrays a vivid tableau of faith and apprehension, ultimately culminating in a jubilant celebration of divine providence and its enduring legacy for generations to come.

—Program notes © Taylor Scott Davis

The Artists



Joanna Medawar Nacheff, Conductor

Joanna Medawar Nacheff is recognized as the first woman conductor from the Middle East. Born in Beirut, Lebanon, she moved to Los Angeles in 1976. Nacheff is Director of Choral and Orchestral Activities at El Camino College, having earned her Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Southern California. She is founder and Artistic Director of Joanna Medawar Nacheff Singers and Artistic Director/Conductor of the Torrance Pops Orchestra. Since 1980, she

has served as the Choir Director at Peninsula Community Church. Nacheff has directed both locally and in guest appearances in motion pictures, and toured nationally and internationally with her performing groups. Over the past 30 years, her concert tours included the US, Canada, Hawaii, Eastern Europe, Vienna, Lebanon, and Russia. Her guest conducting appearances have included six performances at Carnegie Hall, Al Bustan Summer Festival, Beirut Chants Festival, and the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra. Nacheff is an active member of the American Choral Directors Association.



Georges Tomb, Pianist and Composer

Georges Tomb, an acclaimed composer and concert pianist, studied under Conrad Pope and Christopher Young in Vienna. His compositions have graced prestigious stages worldwide, including the Cannes Film Festival for *Enough! Lebanon's Darkest Hour* and the Italian ballet *Pinocchio*. Recognized as “the Young Morricone” in Italy, Tomb’s talent extends to Hollywood, with numerous film scores in progress. He’s also dedicated to classical projects across the

EU. Tomb’s achievements include awards for his film soundtracks and performances alongside renowned artists like Catherine Deneuve and Leonardo DiCaprio. Honored globally, from a presidential palace in Lebanon to recognition by the US ambassador, he embodies musical excellence.

Hanna Brammer, Soprano

Hanna Brammer has interpreted many of opera’s most beloved soprano roles to great acclaim, including Nedda (*I Pagliacci*), Violetta (*La Traviata*),



Musetta (*La bohème*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*), Michaëla (*Carmen*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Valencienne (*The Merry Widow*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), and Mabel (*The Pirates of Penzance*). Equally at home interpreting the classics as she is performing lesser known works, Brammer's other performance credits include Vespina (*L'Infedeltà Delusa*), Leïla (*The Pearl Fishers*), Nuri (*Tiefland*), Sofia (*Il Signor Bruschino*), Carolina (*Il Matrimonio Segreto*), and Giulia (*La scala di seta*), among others. She made her professional debut as Rose Murrant

in Opera North's 2014 production of *Street Scene*. Since then, she has gone on to perform leading roles with Opera Columbus, St. Petersburg Opera, Sarasota Opera, and Nashville Opera.



Lisa Marie Rogali, Mezzo-Soprano

Award-winning American mezzo-soprano Lisa Marie Rogali has been praised for her “nuanced voice” and “spontaneity” on the stage. *Opera News* described her debut performance with Minnesota Opera as “... a tour de force of diction, precision and pizzazz.” Ms. Rogali is quickly establishing herself as a versatile performer of opera and musical theater as well as contemporary and concert music. This season, Ms. Rogali joins Detroit Opera's Resident Artist

Program, singing the roles of Kate Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*, Lapak in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and covering Dodo in *Breaking the Waves*. She will also make her role debut as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with North Carolina Opera and debut with South Florida Symphony as alto soloist in Handel's *Messiah*. In the 2024–2025 season, Ms. Rogali makes her role début in the title role of *Carmen* in a co-production between Virginia Opera and Florentine Opera, returns to North Carolina Opera in her role debut as Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, joins Orpheus PDX as The Elf in *The Rose Elf*, and returns to South Florida Symphony for Handel's *Messiah*. Tonight's performance marks Ms. Rogali's Carnegie Hall debut.

Dylan Davis, Tenor

A 2022 Apprentice Artist with Santa Fe Opera, tenor Dylan Davis performed Shepherd in *Tristan und Isolde* and chorus in *Carmen*, *The Barber of Seville*, and *M. Butterfly*. He was a Studio Artist with Central City Opera in 2019, winning the company's Studio Artist Award, and he returned in 2021 as an Apprentice Artist to cover the Duke in *Rigoletto*. He spent the 2021–2022 season as a Resident Artist of Shreveport Opera, where he



was seen as the Duke (*Rigoletto*), Don José (*The Tragedy of Carmen*), and Basilio (*Le nozze di Figaro*). Dylan returned to Shreveport Opera for their 2022–2023 season to make his role debut as Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*) and cover Alfredo (*La Traviata*). In December 2022, he moved to New York to join the Metropolitan Opera Chorus for Wagner’s *Lohengrin*. In June 2023, he returned to his home state to debut with Mid-Ohio Civic Opera as Jaquino (*Fidelio*) and was honored to receive a full scholarship to study at the Daniel Ferro Vocal Program in Greve in

Chianti in Italy during the month of July.



Kofi Hayford, Bass

With over 30 different operatic roles under his belt, Kofi Hayford is swiftly building his reputation as an accomplished young bass by bringing an “exciting” and “stunning” sound to the stage. Kofi’s talents have taken him as far as the Arctic Circle—performing a series of concerts in the Northwest Territories in Canada. Mr. Hayford has sung with the Metropolitan Opera Guild, United Nations Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, NJ Verismo

Opera, Gateway Classical Music Society, Connecticut Lyric Opera, and many others. Kofi’s major opera roles have included: La Roche in Strauss’ *Capriccio*, Raimondo in Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Mephistopheles in *Faust*, Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula*, Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Sparafucile and Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, and Baldassare in *La Favorita*.



Sarah Pearson, Conductor

Recognized as one of Chattanooga and Cleveland’s most gifted young arts leaders, Sarah Pearson has become a highly sought-after conductor with a busy schedule ahead. Throughout her career, Pearson has conducted a wide range of orchestras, including the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas (SoNA), the Lviv Philharmonic Orchestra, and many more. Her diverse repertoire and musical expertise have garnered

international acclaim. Currently, Sarah Pearson holds key positions, serving as the Music Director/Conductor and Founder of The Cleveland

Orchestra and Chorus of Tennessee, Music Director and Conductor for The Cleveland Pops, and Assistant Conductor for Symphony of Northwest Arkansas (SoNA). Additionally, she shares her knowledge as an Adjunct Music Professor at Cleveland State Community College, championing new music and arts in education. Pearson earned her Bachelor of Music Performance at Tennessee Temple University and her dual Masters Degree in Instrumental Conducting and Music Education at Lee University School of Music. Ms. Pearson is represented by Vida Art Agency in Zurich, Switzerland, who manages her European engagements.



Amy Yekel, Mezzo-Soprano

Winner of the Wagner Society of New York's first place Robert Lauch Award and Leiderkranz finalist, Amy Yekel is an award-winning International American Mezzo-Soprano. She recently sang *Liebested* with Opera Classica Europa in Bayreuth. Amy has also appeared on several occasions in concerts and oratorio performances which include Verdi's *Requiem*, Händel's *Messiah*, Schumann's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Harmony Mass*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Haydn's

"Lord Nelson Mass," and Mozart's "Coronation Mass." Amy Yekel is a former first place winner of Palm Springs Opera Scholarship Competition, Arizona Lyric Opera Scholarship Competition, The Canton Civic Opera Scholarship Competition, Akron Symphony Chorus Scholarship, Tuesday Musical Club Scholarship, Mary S. Bower's Scholarship, The John MacDonald Scholarship, and The McDowell Scholarship. She has received awards from The Wagner Society of New York, The Wagner Society of Ohio, The National Society of Art and Letters, and the Harold Haugh Competition.



Jason Duika, Baritone

Verdi baritone Jason Duika has continued to rise in the classical music world, having most recently sung Escamillo, in Bizet's *Carmen*, with Boheme Opera NJ, where the critics said, "Baritone Jason Duika cut a dashing figure as the charismatic toreador Escamillo, vocally well matching Bizet's rich orchestration ... Duika had the ringing quality of a basso profundo in the lower register of the lively 'Toreador' song" (Nancy Plum, *Town Topics*). Previously, in California, in the

fall of 2022, Jason sang Germont at West Bay Opera, in *La Traviata*, where the review said, "Baritone Jason Duika's singing is smooth and mellow. And he delivers his signature aria 'Di Provenza il mar il suol,' with great mellifluous intensity."



Andrew Roby, Conductor

Andrew Roby, DMA, is in his fifth season as Artistic Director for the Greenville Choral Society. He serves as principal conductor of the organization's 90-voice Concert Choir. Andrew is an active church musician and currently serves as Associate Pastor for Music and Worship Arts for The Memorial Baptist Church, Greenville, NC, a position he has held since October 2017. Previously, he served as Minister of Music with the First Baptist Church, Shelby, North Carolina

for over 16 years. For 12 years, Andrew directed the North Carolina Baptist Singers and Orchestra, an organization composed of approximately 160 church musicians from across the state. He is a member of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina's Music Ministry Team. A Past President of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) North Carolina chapter, Andrew currently serves on the Executive Board as Membership Chair.



James Benjamin Kinchen, Jr., Conductor

James Benjamin Kinchen, Jr., is a Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, is a native of Jacksonville, Florida and has taught music and directed choral groups at Stanton High School, Jacksonville; Florida Community College at Jacksonville; Southern Illinois University; Southeastern Illinois College; Hampton University; and Winston-Salem State University. His degrees are from Jacksonville

University, Southern Illinois University, and the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Music Director of the Milwaukee Choristers, a large, self-sustaining community chorus, since 1993, he has conducted the Choristers in several significant performances, including concert tours of Germany, Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Italy. He is also on the music staff of Saint Paul Baptist Church, Racine, Wisconsin. He is an affiliate of the Center for Black Music Research, and holds membership in the National Association for Music Education, and the National Collegiate Choral Organization. He has also served on the Wisconsin Music Educators Association Executive Board. Kinchen made his Carnegie Hall conducting debut on Easter Sunday of 1998, conducting a concert of African American "spirituals" under the auspices of MidAmerica Productions, and returned to that stage in March of 2004 to lead choir and orchestra in a performance of the Fauré Requiem and again in March 2006 to conduct choral/orchestral forces in the Vivaldi Gloria. He is pleased and

honored to introduce Carnegie Hall audiences to Margaret Bonds' little jewel, *The Ballad of the Brown King*, edited by Malcolm J. Merriweather.



Sarah Joyce Cooper, Soprano

Soprano Sarah Joyce Cooper has been hailed for her “meltingly beautiful” (*Opera News*) singing and “alluring” (Don & Catharine Bryan Cultural Series) stage presence. Ms. Cooper made her Carnegie Hall debut with MidAmerica productions as the soprano soloist in Poulenc’s *Gloria* in July 2023. Performances include La Charmeuse in *Thaïs* (Maryland Lyric Opera), Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* (Opera Western Reserve), Violetta in *La Traviata* (MassOpera),

Mimi in *La Bohème* (Boston Opera Collaborative), Micaëla in *Carmen* (Prelude to Performance), Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Boston Opera Collaborative), Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Savannah Voice Festival). Ms. Cooper has also appeared as a soloist with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, the Maryland Lyric Opera Orchestra, and the Radcliffe Choral Society at Harvard University. In 2019, she was invited to perform as a soloist with the Du Bois Orchestra in the historic world premiere of Florence Price’s long-lost cantata, *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*. As a pre-med, Ms. Cooper completed her Bachelor’s Degree in French at Princeton University, where she first began to develop the foundation for her “mastery of French style” (*Opera News*) while conducting research for her undergraduate thesis on sacred themes in the *mélodies*, *romances*, and *cantiques* of Gabriel Fauré.



Lucia Bradford, Mezzo-Soprano

Mezzo-soprano, Lucia Bradford is a native of Brooklyn, New York. Ms. Bradford has performed a number of operatic roles including Carmen in Bizet’s *La Tragedie de Carmen*, Zita in Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*, La Principessa in Puccini’s *Suor Angelica*, The Mother in Ravel’s *L’Enfant des Sortileges*, Mercedes in Bizet’s *Carmen*, Mrs. Quickly in Verdi’s *Falstaff*, The Sorceress in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, Gertrude in Gounod’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Hippolyta in

Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Miss Todd in Menotti’s *Old Maid and the Thief*, the Duchess of Plaza Toro in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Gondoliers*, Azelia Dessalines in William Grant Still’s opera *Troubled Island*, Douglas Tappin’s *I dream as Grandma*, Mary Watkins’ *Emmett Till* as Mamie Till, and Maria in the Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*. Lucia’s concert works include Mozart’s *Vesperae solennes de Confessore*, Hadyn’s “Lord

Nelson Mass,” De Falla’s *El amor Brujo*, William Grant Still’s *And they lynched him*, Nathaniel Dett’s *The Ordering of Moses*, Julia Perry’s *Stabat Mater*, Handel’s *Messiah*, Mozart’s *Requiem*, Durufle’s *Requiem*, Bach’s *B Minor Mass* with the Voices of Ascension, and Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* at Carnegie Hall with the Oratorio Society of New York.



Zabriel Rivers, Tenor

Gullah-Geechie tenor Zabriel Rivers hails from Saint Helena Island, South Carolina. Zabriel was the Alabama Music Education Association Study/Research Grant Recipient where he participated in the Early Music; Oratorio program and conducted research in vocal science. Awarded the Presser Scholar Award, he received a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Alabama State University. Recent credits include Jim (*Big River*), Jimmy Early (*Dreamgirls*), and

Frederick J. Loudin (*Jubilee*) [Alabama Shakespeare Festival], as well as Pane (*La Calisto*), and Orfeo (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) [New England Conservatory of Music]. An avid Opera and Musical Theater singer, Zabriel has recorded the world premiere composition of the opera *Cosmic Cowboy*, commissioned by White Snake Projects. Zabriel was a featured soloist in Leonard Bernstein’s Chichester Psalms and Handel’s *Messiah* Sing (Parish of All Saints, Ashmont). He has toured alongside Common, Tasha Cobbs, and William Murphy. Zabriel is a member of Phi Mu Alpha Fraternity of America and currently serves as the district advocate for the Atlanta Chapter of the Recording Academy, the organization that presents the Grammy Awards.



Fred Redd, Baritone

Baritone Fred Redd, has performed throughout the US and internationally in concert, opera, musical theater, radio, TV, and film, receiving glowing reviews in *Opera News*, London’s *Opera Now*, *The New York Times* among others. Tonight marks his fifth solo performance on this iconic stage including previous MidAmerica productions of Orff’s *Carmina Burana* and Hayes’ *Te Deum*. Early in his career, Fred made his Lincoln Center debut in New York City

Opera’s Emmy-nominated *Porgy & Bess* and returned in 2019 as a featured artist in the World Premiere of *Stonewall*. 2022 has already witnessed his interpretation of Wotan in Wagner’s *Das Rheingold* (Trilogy Opera), Hark in *Nat Turner* (NJ Symphony/Trilogy Opera), Andrew Young and Barbara Jordan’s grandfather in two films produced by Voza Rivers/New Heritage

Theatre, and as Scarpia in a reading of Puccini's *Tosca* (National Opera Center). Fred is an active board member with the Creative Stage Collective, William Warfield Scholarship Fund, and an advisor with other performing arts organizations.



Jonathan Palant, Conductor

Jonathan Palant is Associate Dean of the Arts and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Texas at Dallas and is founder and conductor of Credo, a 150-member community choir, and the Dallas Street Choir, a musical outlet for those affected by homelessness. In addition, Dr. Palant is Director of Music at Kessler Park United Methodist Church. In June 2016, Dr. Palant made his Carnegie Hall conducting debut performing with renowned artists Frederica von

Stade, Harolyn Blackwell, Jake Heggie, and Broadway composer Stephen Schwartz. From 2007–2011, he served as Artistic Director of Dallas' Turtle Creek Chorale. Prior to that, Palant held collegiate teaching positions at Western Kentucky University and Madonna University, Livonia, Michigan. He taught secondary choral music at University School, an all-boys independent school in Cleveland, Ohio, and San Pasqual High School in Escondido, California. Palant currently serves as president emeritus of the National Alliance for Music In Vulnerable Communities, Repertoire and Standards Chair for the Southwest American Choral Directors Association (SWACDA), and sits on the board of directors of the Intercollegiate Men's Chorus. He has also served on the state board of the Michigan chapter of the American Choral Directors Association and Youth First Texas where he was founder and conductor of Dallas PUMP!, a choir serving at-risk youth. Both Palant's book, *Brothers, Sing On! Conducting the Tenor-Bass Choir*, and *The Jonathan Palant Choral Series* are published by the Hal Leonard Corporation. Palant holds degrees from Michigan State University, Temple University, and the University of Michigan.



Virginia Mims, Soprano

American soprano Virginia Mims makes her debut at Carnegie Hall in this performance. This season, she returns to Sarasota Opera to sing Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* as well as sing excerpts from *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto* in their Music of Giuseppe Verdi Gala Concert. She recently performed the role of Rowan in Britten's *The Little Sweep* and covered the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor* as well as Sandrina in Haydn's *L'infedeltà delusa* during their 2023–

2024 season. She debuted there two seasons ago as an Apprentice Artist where she received the Leo M. Rogers Award for Outstanding Performance. Role credits include Mimì (*La Bohème*) at Sachsenwald Forum (Reinbek, Germany); Musetta (*La Bohème*), Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*), Mary Bailey (*It's A Wonderful Life* by Heggie), Blumenmädchen (*Parsifal*) at Indiana University; Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*) with Brevard Music Center; and Zemfira (*Aleko*) with Carol Vaness' Opera Workshop. During Summer 2023, Virginia attended the prestigious International Meistersinger Akademie where she sang excerpts of Manon (*Manon*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), and Violetta (*La Traviata*).



Preston Hawes, New England Symphonic Ensemble Artistic Director and Concertmaster

Hailed by the European Academy of Arts and Sciences as an “electrifying and virtuosic” performer with “exquisite taste and rare talent,” Canadian violinist Dr. Preston Hawes is a laureate of the Concours de musique du Canada, the Andrews International Music Competitions, and the Prix de Musique de Chambre à Fontainebleau, and is a recipient of the J.C. Van Hulsteyn Award and Peabody Career Grant. He

has been heard as a soloist in more than 35 countries and in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, and Plovdiv Symphony Hall. Having earned a Master of Music degree and the coveted Artist Diploma at Yale University, Dr. Hawes completed his studies by earning a Doctorate of Musical Arts from The Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Hawes is a professor of music and director of strings at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., and is the artistic director of the New England Symphonic Ensemble.

New England Symphonic Ensemble

With performances described as “flawless” (*Rhodes Magazine*), the New England Symphonic Ensemble (NESE), under the artistic direction of Dr. Preston Hawes, is among the most frequently featured organizations in Carnegie Hall. Since its inception in 1989, the NESE has drawn global critical acclaim in hundreds of concerts on the world’s most prestigious stages. In collaboration with MidAmerica Productions, the NESE has been led by a roster of guest conductors including John Rutter, Peter Tiboris, Sherrill Milnes, Helmuth Rilling, Simon Carrington, and Jonathan Willcocks, and regularly hosts international guest soloists. NESE world premieres include Dinos Constantinides’s *Byron’s Greece*, *Hymn to the Human Spirit*, and *Midnight Fantasy II* for wind ensemble; John Rutter’s *Cantate Domino*, *Distant Land*, *Magnificat*, and *Mass of the Children*; and John Leavitt’s *A Christmas Garland*. The NESE boasts

multiple US premieres, including Mozart's *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots*, Reimann's Concerto for Violin and Cello, Tchaikovsky's *Ode to Joy*, and René Clausen's *Hellas: In the Name of Freedom*. The NESE can be heard on the Naxos label in an award-winning recording of spirituals with internationally renowned mezzo-soprano, the late Barbara Smith Conrad.

MidAmerica Productions, Inc.

During its 40 years, MidAmerica Productions has brought together conductors, soloists, and choral and instrumental ensembles from the US and abroad to appear at New York's top venues, including Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage, Weill Recital Hall, and Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall; and Alice Tully Hall and Avery Fisher Hall (now David Geffen Hall) at Lincoln Center. Additionally, MidAmerica Productions, Inc., has presented concerts in numerous US cities and in countries throughout the world, including Greece, England, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, France, Portugal, and Russia. MidAmerica Productions' concerts have showcased choral groups singing oratorios with talented conductors, full orchestra, and professional soloists; individual instrumental and choral groups performing as part of the Ensemble Spotlight Series; and solo recitals. Diverse programs have included Madrigal Festivals, Vocal Jazz Festivals, National Wind Ensemble, National Festival Youth Orchestra, and Sweet Adelines. Among the renowned guest conductors who have led MidAmerica's concerts are John Rutter (who has conducted more than 130 concerts in Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall), Sherrill Milnes, Lukas Foss, Helmuth Rilling, H. Robert Reynolds, JoAnne Falletta, Michael Morgan, and Jonathan Willcocks. More than 800 conductors have conducted on MidAmerica's series in New York and abroad, sharing the stage with 1300 solo artists from the world's greatest opera companies and concert stages, and 3700 choral ensembles from the US and abroad. There have been 174 youth and collegiate orchestras as well as 146 youth and collegiate bands, jazz bands, and wind ensembles.

MidAmerica Productions: 265 Sunrise Highway, Suite 1-183; Rockville Centre, NY 11570
212-239-0205 | midamerica-music.com

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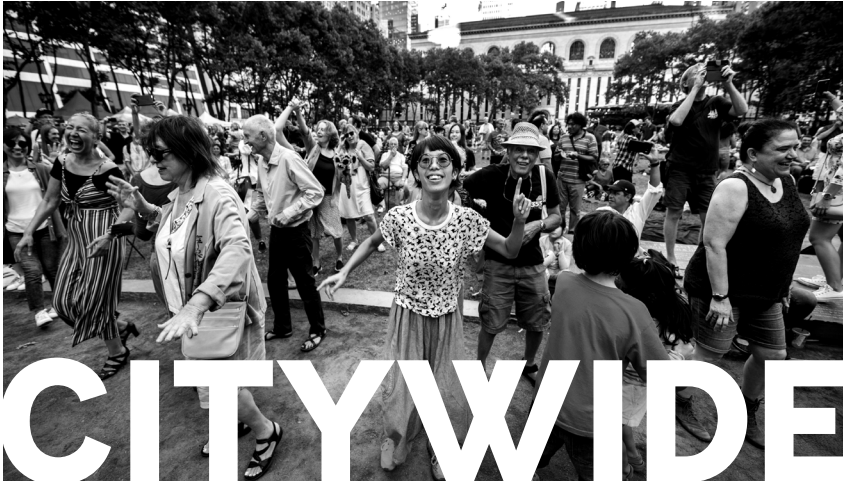
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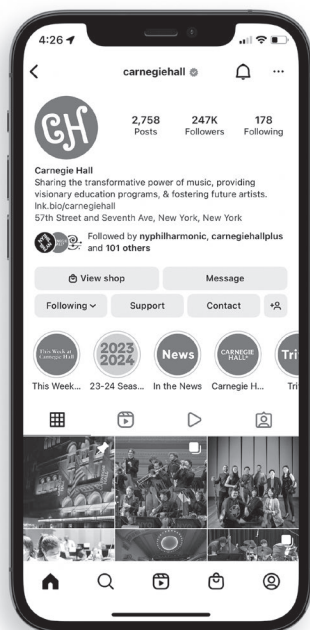
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