



*Our Song, Our Story:
The New Generation of Black Voices*

Musical direction by Damien Sneed
with Amanda Bottoms and Raven McMillon

GOGUE
PERFORMING
ARTS
CENTER
AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

2022-23

Orchestra & Chamber Music Series

THE JAY AND SUSIE GOGUE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY
presents

Our Song, Our Story: The New Generation of Black Voices

Damien Sneed, piano and music director

Raven McMillon, soprano
Amanda Bottoms, mezzo-soprano

Griot String Quartet

Amyr Joyner, violin
Messiah Ahmed, violin
Edward Hardy, viola
Thapelo Masita, cello

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

7:30 p.m.

Walter Stanley and Virginia Katharyne Evans
Woltosz Theatre

*Our thanks to the Auburn Chamber Music Society
for their decades of commitment to chamber music in Auburn
and collaborative support in our 2022-23 season.*

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Program

OPENING

Evocation Hale Smith
(1925-2009)

SPIRITUALS

In That Great Gettin' Up Morning Traditional Spiritual
arr. Damien Sneed
(b. 1979)

Balm in Gilead Traditional Spiritual
arr. Damien Sneed

Scandalized My Name Traditional Spiritual
arr. Damien Sneed

My Soul's Been Anchored In The Lord Traditional Spiritual
arr. Florence Price
(1887-1953)

OPERA ARIAS

Cruda sorte! Amor tiranno! Gioachino Rossini
from *L'Italiana in Algeri* (1792-1868)

Caro nome che il mio cor Giuseppe Verdi
from *Rigoletto* (1813-1901)

Habanera Georges Bizet
from *Carmen* (1838-1875)

Quando me'n vo Giacomo Puccini
from *La Bohème* (1858-1924)

OPERA DUETS

Belle nuit (Barcarolle) Jacques Offenbach
from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1819-1880)

Evening Prayer Engelbert Humperdinck
from *Hansel and Gretel* (1854-1921)

Program

STRING QUARTET

Allegro Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson
from *String Quartet No. 1, "Calvary"* (1932-2004)

LIEDER

Nacht und Träume Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Du Ring an meinem Finger, op. 42, no. 4 Robert Schumann
from *Frauenliebe und Leben* (1810-1856)

Allerseelen, op. 10, no. 8 Richard Strauss
(1864-1969)

Kornblumen, op. 22, no. 1 Richard Strauss

BLACK COMPOSERS

Out of the South Florence Price

Among the Fuchsias Harry T. Burleigh
(1866-1949)

Till I Wake Harry T. Burleigh

My Feet May Take a Little While Errollyn Wallen
(b. 1958)

The Earth Sings Damien Sneed

He's Got The Whole World In His Hands Traditional Spiritual
arr. Damien Sneed



As a multi-genre recording artist and instrumentalist, **DAMIEN SNEED** is a pianist, vocalist, organist, composer, conductor, arranger, producer and arts educator whose work spans multiple genres. He has worked with opera, classical, jazz, pop, R&B and gospel legends, including the late Aretha Franklin and Jessye Norman, and is featured on Norman's final recording, *Bound For The Promised Land* on Albany Records. Sneed has also worked with Wynton Marsalis, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Ashford & Simpson, J'Nai Bridges, Lawrence Brownlee and many others. He has served as music director for Grammy Award-winning gospel artists The Clark Sisters, Richard Smallwood, Donnie McClurkin, Hezekiah Walker, Marvin Sapp, Karen Clark Sheard, Dorinda Clark-Cole and Kim Burrell, among others.

Sneed's most recent studio recording is *Damien Sneed: Unplugged*, an all-gospel collection of soulful and inspirational songs, recorded in a spare studio setting with Sneed on piano and vocals alongside several noted vocalists, including Chenee Campbell, Linny Smith, Tiffany Stevenson and Matia Washington. In January 2020, Sneed released his debut classical album, *Classically Harlem and We Shall Overcome Deluxe* on his boutique label, LeChateau Earl Records, which was established in 2009 to reflect his varied musical interests. Previous recordings also include *Jazz In Manhattan* (September 2019); *The Three Sides of Damien Sneed: Classical, Jazz and Sanctified Soul* (July 2018); *Broken To Minister: The Deluxe Edition* (March 2015); *Spiritual Sketches* (June 2013); and *Introspections LIVE* (January 2010). Sneed is a 2020 Dove Award winner for his work as a featured producer and writer on The Clark Sisters' project, *The Return*, released in March 2020.

Sneed is the recipient of the 2014 Medal of Excellence from the Sphinx Foundation, is on the faculty at Manhattan School of Music, and is currently Artist in Residence with MSU College of Music and Wharton Center.



Praised for her “superb vocal and dramatic chops” (*Opera News*) and “captivating” artistry (*Huffington Post*) **AMANDA LYNN BOTTOMS**, mezzo-soprano, is a current member of the Cafritz Young Artist Program at the Washington National Opera. She will join the prestigious Santa Fe Opera this summer as an apprentice singer, covering the roles of Hermia in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Fillipveyna in *Eugene Onegin* and Ino in the world premiere of John Corliagno’s *The Lord of Cries*.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute, The Juilliard School and SUNY Fredonia, Bottoms has broad experience performing and teaching opera, art song, pop and musical theatre. An active performer worldwide, her mainstage work this season includes debuts with LA Opera, Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago and several returns to the New York Festival of Song concert series. Last season’s work included her debut as Strawberry Woman in Francesca Zambello’s *Porgy & Bess*^{*}, the Maurice Sendak production of *Die Zauberflöte*, Menotti’s *The Consul*, and the world premieres of *Castor and Patience* with Cincinnati Opera^{*} and Michael Lanci’s *Admissions*.

Bottoms debuted in the fall of 2019 with Opera Philadelphia as part of the O19 Festival, performing the role of Smeraldina in Prokofiev’s *The Love for Three Oranges* and returned to headline the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society Emerging Voices Recital Series in the winter. Bottoms has been a finalist in prestigious international competitions including the George London Foundation, Zachary Foundation, Operalia and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Regionals.

Recent collaborations include the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin, NHK Symphony Orchestra of Tokyo, Opera Columbus, Buffalo Philharmonic, Wolf Trap Opera, the Chautauqua Institution, New York Festival of Song, UCLA Symphony, Curtis Symphony Orchestra and the Cecilia Chorus of New York at Carnegie Hall.

^{*} Performance postponed due to COVID-19



Soprano **RAVEN McMILLON** is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. McMillon was named a 2021 Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan Opera's Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. She returned to Houston Grand Opera as a second-year studio artist for their 2021-22 season as Frasquita in *Carmen*, Peter in Joel Thompson's *The Snowy Day* and Papagena in *The Magic Flute*. Elsewhere, she made her house and role debut at Des Moines Metro Opera as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* as well as a house and role debut at Opera Philadelphia as Gilda in *Rigoletto*. Her 2021-22 season also included premiering the roles of Barbara/Mrs. Latch in Kevin Puts' *The Hours* with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

In the summer of 2021, McMillon joined Cincinnati Opera as Frasquita in the company's outdoor presentation of *Carmen*. She was also seen in her role debut as Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Opera Steamboat. During the 2021-22 season, she made her house debut at Houston Grand Opera in scenes from *Carmen* (Frasquita) and *L'elisir d'amore* (Adina) in the Studio Showcase. She was also seen in the HGO Digital season as Rona Richards in *The Impresario*, Peter in *The Making of The Snowy Day* documentary, and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*. McMillon also performed as a soloist in the Giving Voice concert as well as the HGO Studio Recitals.

In 2020, McMillon also collaborated with Lyric Opera of the North as Trish in the company's chapter in the Decameron Coalition's *Tales from a Safe Distance*.

Other opera credits include La Princesse in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra); Adele in *Die Fledermaus* (Carnegie Mellon); Goldie in *Goldie B. Locks and the Three Singing Bears* (Pittsburgh Festival Opera); and Linfea in *La Calisto* (CCM). McMillon has also workshopped new roles such as Mary in Faye Chiao's *The Secret Codes of Mary Bowser* and Lucy in Tobias Picker's *Awakenings*.

McMillon earned an M.M. in vocal performance at the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music and a B.F.A. in vocal performance at Carnegie Mellon University.

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