



WASHINGTON  
PERFORMING ARTS

# 2022/23 SEASON THE WORLD IN OUR CITY



## **SPHINX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Tito Muñoz, conductor**

**EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble**

**Eugene Rogers, Music Director**

**Members of The Washington Chorus**

**Eugene Rogers, Artistic Director**

**Aundi Marie Moore, soprano**

**TUES, JAN 31, 8 p.m.**

**THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS  
CONCERT HALL**



WASHINGTON  
PERFORMING ARTS

# 2022/23 SEASON

## THE WORLD IN OUR CITY

Join Us at The John F. Kennedy Center for the  
Performing Arts Terrace Theater!



### **COTTON**

**John E. Dowell, Damien Geter,  
Denyce Graves, Justin Austin,  
Laura Ward**

Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m.

This first annual Washington Performing Arts Ruth Bader Ginsburg Memorial Recital offers a powerful evening by premier talents in the performing and visual arts. Legendary mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves—a favorite artist of Justice Ginsburg’s— and baritone Justin Austin lead an intensely moving song cycle by rising-star composer Damien Geter. *COTTON* was imagined, curated, and commissioned by Philadelphia’s Lyric Fest recital series in commemoration of their 20th Anniversary. The work was inspired by photographer John E. Dowell’s similarly named exhibition, *COTTON: THE SOFT, DANGEROUS BEAUTY OF THE PAST*. Featuring the phenomenal poetry of Nikki Giovanni, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Afaa Michael Weaver, Lauren Alleyne, Charlotte Blake Alston, Glenis Redmond, Alora Young, and Trapeta Mayson, *COTTON* is a feast for the senses, a spark for the imagination, and a highlight of the season.

*Special thanks: National Endowment for the Arts, Mr. Michael Sonnenreich, Betsy and Robert Feinberg, the Galena-Yorktown Foundation, and donors to the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Memorial Award and Recital Fund*

**\$40+**

### **TICKETS AND INFORMATION:**

**WashingtonPerformingArts.org • (202) 785-9727**

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# WELCOME

## A NOTE FROM SPHINX ORGANIZATION ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, AFA S. DWORKIN

It is an honor to share this special program with you, our audience, on the occasion of Sphinx's most significant milestone, our 25th anniversary. As the organization whose work is set at the intersection of social justice and the arts, we are overjoyed to celebrate the talents of so many living Black and Latinx composers, presented by the one-of-a-kind collection of the incredible artists of the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra and EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble and Washington DC's own The Washington Chorus. The program celebrates the deep tradition of artistic excellence and a remarkable legacy of sound, expression, and unity. This tradition is both historically rooted and upheld proudly to this day. Our collective journey is one of awareness, solidarity, empowerment, and celebration. As we work to evolve and enrich the classical music canon through these important works, we do so in unison with you, our listeners. Thank you for sharing your open minds and hearts.

Washington Performing Arts and The John F. Kennedy Center  
for the Performing Arts,  
in co-ordination with the Washington Chorus,  
Present

## **SPHINX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Tito Muñoz, conductor**

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**Eugene Rogers, Music Director**

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**CARLOS SIMON**

(b. 1986)

*Motherboxx Connection*

**SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR**

(1875-1912)

Ballade for Orchestra in A minor, Op. 33

**VALERIE COLEMAN**

(b. 1970)

*Seven O'Clock Shout*

**MICHAEL ABELS**

(b. 1962)

*Delights and Dances*

Rainel Joubert, Violin I  
Rubén Rengel, Violin II  
Jordan Bak, Viola  
Christine Lamprea, Cello

### **INTERMISSION**

**TRADITIONAL,**

Arr. Augustus O. Hill

“Fix Me, Jesus”

EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble

Aundi Marie Moore, Soloist

**CARLOS CORDERO**

(b. 1992)

*Holding Our Breath*

Julie Flanders, poet  
EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble

**JOEL THOMPSON**  
(b. 1988)

- Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*
- I. "Why do you have your guns out?"  
- Kenneth Chamberlain, 68
  - II. "What are you following me for?"  
- Trayvon Martin, 17
  - III. "Mom, I'm going to college."  
- Amadou Diallo, 23
  - IV. "I don't have a gun. Stop shooting."  
- Michael Brown, 18
  - V. "You shot me! You shot me!"  
- Oscar Grant, 22
  - VI. "It's not real." - John Crawford, 22
  - VII. "I can't breathe." - Eric Garner, 43

**JOHN ROGER STEPHENS**  
(b. 1978)

"Glory" from Selma

**LONNIE LYNN**  
(b. 1972)

**CHE SMITH**  
(b. 1977)

Arr. Eugene Rogers

LaVonte Heard, Soloist  
Monique Holmes-Spells, Spoken Word

*This performance is made possible through the generous support of Mike and Luanne Gutermuth.*



*Washington Performing Arts's originally scheduled 2021 presentation of the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra was made possible through the generous support of the following sponsors: Rudy Burwell and Mona Mohib/Encompass Supply; the Dan Cameron Family Foundation.*

*Washington Performing Arts's classical music performances this season are made possible in part through the generous support of Betsy and Robert Feinberg.*

*Special thanks to the following lead supporters of Washington Performing Arts's mission-driven work: Jacqueline Badger Mars and Mars, Incorporated; D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities; the National Capital Arts and Cultural Affairs Program and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; and the Dallas Morse Coors Foundation for the Performing Arts.*

**MARS**



# PROGRAM NOTES

## ***Motherboxx Connection***

Carlos Simon (b. 1986)

### **Notes from the composer**

"Where are all the Black people in comics?" This is a question posed by the creative duo Black Kirby (John Jennings and Stacey Robinson). Based heavily in Afrofuturism, Black Kirby's characters show Black people as heroes using ancient customs and futurist motifs from the African and African American diaspora. This piece is inspired by the many heroic characters found in the work of Black Kirby, but mainly *Motherboxx Connection*.

According to scholar Regina N. Bradley, *Motherboxx Connection* is "a pun on Jack Kirby's motherbox, a living computer connected to the world, the Motherboxx, too, is a living computer with a heightened awareness of racial and sexual discourses surrounding the Black body. The motherboxx is the technological equivalent of the 'mother land' in the Black diaspora imagination. She is where black identities merge and depart."

To represent the power and intelligence of the motherboxx, I have composed a short, fast-moving musical idea that constantly weaves in and throughout the orchestra. A majestic, fanfare-like motif also provides the overall mood of strength and heroism. I imagine the motherboxx as an all-knowing entity that is aware of the multi-faceted aspects of blackness. This piece is a part of a larger multi-movement

symphonic work entitled TALES, which explores several African and African American folklore as well as Afrofuturists stories. This work is commissioned by the Sphinx Organization for its 25th Anniversary in partnership with the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra.

## **Ballade in A Minor for Orchestra, Op. 33**

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

The past three years have introduced many unusual factors into the realm of classical music. As the world innovated, our field has had the opportunity to uncover some of the best music that has been and continued to be authored by Black and Brown composers. Among countless gems is the name of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, heard relatively seldom until recently. We are proud to bring his beautiful music as part of tonight's offerings. The child of a British mother and Sierra Leonean father, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in London in 1875 and raised there by his mother and her family. He enrolled in the Royal College of Music at the age of 15, where he excelled in composition. Taylor's talent was distinctive, having garnered him substantial support within the music community, so much so that by age 21 he made a significant name for himself. That acclaim was augmented when Sir Edward Elgar recommended the young composer for major commissions in the late 19th century. In September of 1889

the premiere of Coleridge-Taylor's "Ballade in A Minor" was received with triumph.

His fame brought him to the United States three times, where President Theodore Roosevelt received him at the White House. In Washington, D.C., a 200-voice African American chorus named after the composer was founded. Taylor died early at the age of 37, leaving a tremendous legacy behind.

The "Ballade in A Minor" is dramatic, sonorous, and full sounding. From the timpani, flutes, and string sonority, the piece grabs our ear with command and beauty.

### ***Seven O'Clock Shout***

Valerie Coleman (b. 1970)

#### **Notes from the composer**

*Seven O'Clock Shout* is an anthem inspired by the tireless frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the heartwarming ritual of evening serenades that brought people together amidst isolation to celebrate life and the sacrifices of heroes. The work begins with a distant and solitary solo between two trumpets in fanfare fashion to commemorate the isolation forced upon humankind, and the need to reach out to one another. The fanfare blossoms into a lushly dense landscape of nature, symbolizing both the caregiving acts of nurses and doctors as they try to save lives, while nature is transforming and healing herself during a time of self-isolation. It was suggested that a short work for a debut by multi-track recording could account for the ensemble

performing together as if they were in the same room. One of the devices used to address this is the usage of ostinato, which is a rhythmic motif that repeats itself to generate forward motion and, in this case, groove. The ostinato patterns here are laid down by the bass section, allowing the English horn and strings to float over it, gradually building up to that moment at 7 p.m., when cheers, claps, clangings of pots and pans, and shouts ring through the air of cities around the world! The trumpets drive an infectious rhythm, layered with a traditional Son clave rhythm, while the solo trombone boldly rings out an anthem within a traditional African call and response style. The entire orchestra 'shouts' back in response, and the entire ensemble rallies into an anthem that embodies the struggles and triumph of humanity. The work ends in a proud anthem moment where we all come together with grateful hearts to acknowledge that we have survived yet another day.

### ***Delights and Dances***

Michael Abels (b. 1962)

#### **Notes from the composer**

*Delights and Dances* (commissioned by the Sphinx Organization) showcases a quartet of string soloists in a kind of diptych of American musical genres, one regarded as "Black" and the other "White." The piece begins with a slow, lyrical introduction that grows from a cello solo into a duet with the viola, culminating in a gentle crescendo for the full quartet. The first major section is a blues, which allows the soloists to flaunt their



musical talents through a series of solos that are designed to sound improvised, although they are actually notated. The second half of the piece is a rousing bluegrass hoedown, once again featuring the quartet as they trade riffs back and forth (in a way that might recall “Dueling Banjos”) which culminates in a boisterous coda. It’s a piece that celebrates musicians playing together. I hope it fills you with joy.

### “Fix Me, Jesus”

Traditional, Arr. Augustus O Hill

This spiritual begins with the refrain, followed by two stanzas laid out in a call and response pattern. The refrain is a prayer to repair one’s soul: “Oh, fix me.” Richard Newman, in his collection of spirituals, *Go Down, Moses: Celebrating the African American Spiritual*, provides this variant refrain:

O, fix me, Jesus, fix me right.  
Fix me right, fix me right;  
O, fix me, Jesus, fix me right,  
Fix me so I can stand.

Dr. Augustus O. Hill, composer, conductor, is a graduate of Wilberforce University (B.S., mathematics), Miami University (M.S., personnel counseling), and Wayne State University (B.M., composition and M.M., composition and choral conducting), and the University of Michigan (Ph.D. in composition and music theory). He has studied composition, music theory, conducting, and organ performance.

### ***Holding Our Breath***

Music by Carlos Cordero (b. 1992)

Poetry by Julie Flanders (b. 1959)

### **Introduction from the poet**

Breathing is what keeps us alive. It is the mechanism that allows us to sing and communicate. Whenever we are troubled or are in a time of crisis, our instincts are to either hold our breath or to breathe. Taking slow breaths and centering ourselves is what brings us back to a more serene state, allows us space to find solutions, and to look to the future where we can explore the faith that we will be ok. During this pandemic, breathing has been deemed dangerous, being the principal mechanism of how COVID-19 has spread. It is also the time when the phrase “I can’t breathe” became the powerful last words that moved an entire nation to demand rights, not only for the life of a man, but an entire population. Breathing is a cycle that can’t and should not be interrupted. Our piece is centered on facing the fear to breathe: on an individual level as well as next to each other again, and the courage to be together once more; slowly taking in what it means to be alive and singing next to one another.

### **Program notes from the composer and poet**

*Holding Our Breath* explores the worldwide need and fear to breathe together right now, using the lens of breath itself to address the virus, uncertainty, and racism we face. This piece is written to allow different levels of choirs to experience a deep understanding of the concept of breathing. To go far beyond

how the breath is used to produce sound. It will explore how breathing connects us all (singers, composers, conductors, and audience members). This piece will be a place to focus on the vulnerability of breathing: individually and in a group, and to create space for the realization that we are inextricably connected. When we breathe together, we create music that can heal.

What happened? (audible gasp)

What is happening (to us)

(audible gasp)

Can you breathe? Please, help me!

I can't...

"I can't breathe"

Can you breathe?

Can we breathe again?

We are holding

We are holding our breath

With this on breath I pray

With this one breath I hope

With this one breath I let go

With this one breath I stay

With this one breath I say I love You

With this one breath I say goodbye

With this one breath We Breathe.

### **Seven Last Words of the Unarmed**

Joel Thompson (b. 1988)

#### **Notes from the composer**

I. "Why do you have your guns out?"

- Kenneth Chamberlain, 68

Encapsulating the sense of gloom that arises upon the news of the death of another unarmed black man, the chorus rises from the funereal piano ostinato singing Kenneth Chamberlain's last words interpolated with the medieval tune, *L'homme armé doit on doubter* - "The armed man must be feared."

After the final iteration of the 66-year old's dying breath, the chorus repeats one important word: "why?"

II. "What are you following me for?"

- Trayvon Martin, 17

This movement uses the classical form of the fugue not only to portray Trayvon Martin's last moments trying to escape death, but also to sonically capture the daily paranoia of the Black experience while driving on roads, walking on sidewalks, and congregating at various social gatherings. Quotes of *L'homme armé* in the strings underneath the imitative counterpoint in the voices lead to a climactic yell of surprise at the movement's end.

III. "Mom, I'm going to college."

- Amadou Diallo, 23

In New York, February of 1999, four police officers fired 41 shots at Amadou Diallo, a 23-year-old immigrant from Guinea. The undulating pattern in the piano simultaneously yields a sense of calm with its simple harmonic underpinning and unease with its odd 5/4 meter.

IV. "I don't have a gun. Stop shooting." - Michael Brown, 18

Of the seven movements, this one contains the most anger. Through the use of agitated rhythms and multiple harmonic exclamations on the word "stop", the target of the rage is media portrayal of Black men on the news, in comedies, and in dramas. Even in the aftermath of such tragedies, the rhetoric and images used to describe the deceased was markedly appalling across all media.

This was the case, especially, for Michael Brown.

V. "You shot me! You shot me!"  
– Oscar Grant, 22

Oscar Grant III's exclamations of surprise and incredulity were caught on several cellphone recordings in the BART station in which he was murdered. The movement honoring his life is a sonic representation of this epidemic. Aleatoric spoken exclamations of the last words crescendo alongside the humming of *L'homme armé* in the style of the Negro spiritual. Underneath the cacophony, the pulsing C of the piano, violin, and viola persist unflinchingly like a heart monitor until the end.

VI. "It's not real."  
– John Crawford, 22

Although they were referring to the BB gun he was carrying in the Walmart where he was killed, John Crawford's last words escape the lips of thousands of African Americans. Thus, the movement's beginning is the soundtrack to my mental utopia. Saccharine sweet and soaring, the voices and strings are joined by the piano "heart monitor" which persists and gradually infects the strings, like reality interrupting a reverie.

VII. "I can't breathe."  
– Eric Garner, 43

The decision of a Richmond County grand jury to not indict the officer responsible for Eric Garner's death was the impetus for this entire work, and it is only fitting that his last words end the piece. After using a mournful Byzantine texture for the first half of the movement, I tried to

capture the panicked death thralls of asphyxiation in the music.

### "Glory"

John Roger Stephens (b. 1978),  
Lonnie Lynn (b. 1972), Che Smith  
(b. 1977), Arr. Eugene Rogers

Winner of a 2015 Oscar Award, this inspirational song (by John Legend and Common) speaks of hope and looks to the future for healing in the midst of great division. Eugene Rogers's "gospel-like" setting offers comfort to the community and motivates individuals to keep working for a better tomorrow. Through the voice of a powerful soloist, SATB chorus and spoken word artists, the message of unity and hope is left ringing in our ears.

One day when the glory comes,  
It will be ours, It will be ours.

Oh, one day, when the war is won,  
We will be sure,  
We will be sure.

Oh, glory! Glory! Oh, glory! Glory!

Now the war isn't over,  
Victory isn't won.

But we'll fight on to the finish, And  
then when it's all done.

We'll cry, glory! Oh, glory!  
Oh, glory, glory!

This is not a problem for one group  
or one party,

each person must strive to end  
what was started.

MLK had a dream of a table  
where we'd all sit,  
and moving toward this dream  
we cannot quit.

Each man and woman deserves  
their justice.

You can't believe that it's just us,

'cause being persecuted everybody's  
got a story.

I know one day everybody's  
going to see the glory.

The glory is us, united as one neither  
hate, ignorance, judgement, or guns  
can win this war against division  
and discrimination.

Can't you see the greatness  
that's in all of us?

Especially when you give love,  
honor, and trust so let's stop this  
abomination, and start loving as one,  
giving as one, caring as one, feeling

as one, growing as one. Yeah, that's  
right. I'm talking living as one!

One day when the glory comes,  
It will be ours, It will be ours.

Oh, one day, when the war is won  
We will be sure, We will be sure.

Oh, glory! Glory! Oh, glory! Glory!  
Now the war isn't over,  
Victory isn't won.

But we'll fight on to the finish,  
And then when it's all done.

The war isn't over.

We must keep on pressing 'til we  
reach the finish, that's when  
it's all done.

## MUSICIANS

### **Sphinx Symphony Orchestra**

#### **Violin I**

Kelly Hall-Tompkins, *Concertmaster*  
Ruben Rengel  
Maureen Conlon-Gutierrez  
Derek Reeves  
Rainel Joubert  
Clayton Penrose-Whitmore  
Sandro Leal-Santiesteban  
Samuel Vargas  
Yan Izquierdo  
Luis Cuevas

#### **Violin II**

Alex Gonzalez, *Principal*  
Meredith Riley  
Robyn Quinnett  
Sami Merdinian  
Julian Maddox  
Lisa Muci  
Rosalyn Story  
Edith Yokley

#### **Viola**

Dana Kelley, *Principal*  
Celia Hatton  
Jordan Bak  
John Madison  
Jason Amos

Leslie DeShazor

#### **Cello**

Damon Coleman, *Principal*  
Christine Lamprea  
Eri Snowden-Rodriguez  
Mary Ann Ramos  
Derek Menchan  
Ryan Murphy

#### **Bass**

Jonathan Colbert, *Principal*  
Patricia Weitzel  
Christopher Johnson  
Victor Holmes

#### **Electric Bass**

Victor Holmes

#### **Flute**

Judy Dines, *Principal*  
Dennis Carter II

#### **Piccolo**

Shantanique Moore

#### **Oboe**

Titus Underwood, *Principal*  
Geoffrey Johnson

**English Horn**

Tamara Winston

**Clarinet**

Alex Laing, *Principal*

Lori Lovato

Terrance L. Patterson

**Bassoon**

Francisco Joubert Bernard, *Principal*

Maya Stone

**French Horn**

Alberto Suarez, *Principal*

Larry Williams

Adedeji Ogunfolu

Amanda Collins

**Trumpet**

Oscar Garcia, *Principal*

Wayne J. du Maine

Anderson Romero

**Trombone**

David Jackson, *Principal*

Weston Sprott

John Lofton

**Tuba**

Jason Tanksley, *Principal*

**Timpani**

Douglas Cardwell, *Principal*

**Percussion**

Raynor Carroll, *Principal*

Olman Piedra

Brian Young

**Drumset**

Andre Dowell

**Harp**

Elizabeth Steiner, *Principal*

**Piano**

Rod Vester

Wei-Han Wu

**Librarian**

Claudia Restrepo

**EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble****Soprano 1**

Taylor Mackenzie Adams

Rabihah Davis Dunn

Nicole Joseph\*

Amber Merritt

**Soprano 2**

Maia Aramburú

Ivette Flores

Lenora Green-Turner

Kaci Timmons

**Alto 1**

Rebecca Marie Castillo

Lori Celeste Hicks

Lianna Wimberly Williams

**Alto 2**

Melissa Connor

Monique Holmes-Spells\*

Betzabé Juárez

Jaime Sharp

**Tenor 1**

David Miranda

Tyrese Byrd

Matthew Valverde\*

**Tenor 2**

LaVonté L. Heard

Julio César Morales Pineda

Lonnie Reed

Ariel Merivil

**Bass 1**

Branden Hood

Stephen Lancaster

Andrew Smith

**Bass 2**

Steven Berlanga\*

Lucas DeJesus

Joshua Thomas

Joel Thompson

\*Section Leader

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **Sphinx Organization**

The Sphinx Organization is the social justice organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. Sphinx's four program areas – Education & Access, Artist Development, Performing Artists, and Arts Leadership – form a pipeline that develops and supports diversity and inclusion in classical music at every level: music education, artists performing on stage, the repertoire and programming being performed, the communities represented in audiences, and the artistic and administrative leadership within the field. Sphinx programs reach more than 100,000 students and artists, as well as live and broadcast audiences of more than two million annually. Read more about Sphinx's programs at [www.SphinxMusic.org](http://www.SphinxMusic.org).

## **Sphinx Symphony Orchestra**

The Sphinx Symphony Orchestra (SSO) is a unique professional all Black and Latinx orchestra comprised of top musicians from around the country. The SSO comes together annually at the Sphinx Competition for young Black and Latinx string players, serving as mentors to young artists, providing masterclasses and lectures, and promoting works by Black and Latinx composers.

Established in 2000, SSO includes past and current members of the New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Detroit Symphony

Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, as well as faculty members of leading music institutions, including The Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Mannes School of Music, New England Conservatory of Music, Harlem School of the Arts, Rutgers University, and the University of Michigan. Inspired by Sphinx's mission, the ethos of this ensemble is to promote artistic excellence and vibrant expression while celebrating the artistry of Black and Latinx classical artists and composers. Having served as the guest resident orchestra for Napa Valley's Festival del Sole, SSO has collaborated with Branford Marsalis, Take 6, Pinchas Zukerman, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Joshua Bell, and other artists.

## **EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble**

EXIGENCE is a professional vocal ensemble highlighting artistry within Black and Latinx communities. Led by founding conductor Eugene Rogers and comprised of vocal artists including solo performers, educators, conductors and composers, EXIGENCE celebrates the power of community and expression through choral music.

Inspired by the mission of Sphinx, the mission of EXIGENCE is to promote excellence and diversity through choral music within Black and Latinx communities by creating a platform for soloists and composers

of color while inspiring and challenging audiences around the country and world.

EXIGENCE gives vocal artists a first-rate professional vocal experience within a context that champions the sounds of Black and Latinx composers. Selected through audition, 32 vocalists have the opportunity to use their voices as vehicles for change within the cultural landscape of concert choral and vocal music.

The name EXIGENCE is inspired by the definition of the word – ‘an urgent need or demand.’ Like its definition, EXIGENCE believes that vocal concert music continues to need more voices at the table from disparate backgrounds and perspectives. EXIGENCE seeks to foster that perspective through the lens of professional vocal artistry within the Black and Latinx communities.

### **Tito Muñoz, Conductor**

Praised for his versatility, technical clarity, and keen musical insight, Tito Muñoz is internationally recognized as one of the most gifted conductors on the podium today. Now in his seventh season as the Virginia G. Piper Music Director of The Phoenix Symphony, Muñoz previously served as Music Director of the Opéra National de Lorraine and the Orchestre symphonique et lyrique de Nancy in France. Other prior appointments include Assistant Conductor positions with the Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony and Chamber Orchestras, and the Aspen Music Festival.

Muñoz has appeared with many of the most prominent orchestras

in North America, including those of Atlanta, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, and Milwaukee, as well as the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and the National Symphony Orchestra. He also maintains a strong international conducting presence, including recent and forthcoming engagements with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, SWR Symphonieorchester, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre National d’Île de France, Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Danish National Chamber Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Opéra Orchestre National Montpellier/A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Opéra de Rennes/ The Turn of the Screw, Auckland Philharmonia, Sydney Symphony, and Sao Paulo State Symphony.

As a proponent of new music, Muñoz champions the composers of our time and has conducted important premieres of works by Christopher Cerrone, Kenneth Fuchs, Dai Fujikura, Michael Hersch, Adam Schoenberg, and Mauricio Sotelo.

### **Eugene Rogers, Conductor and Founding Director of EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble**

A two-time Michigan Emmy Award winner, a 2017 Sphinx Medal of Excellence recipient, and a 2015 Grammy Award nominee, Eugene Rogers is recognized as a leading conductor and pedagogue throughout the United States and abroad. In addition to being the founding director of EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble, Dr. Rogers is the director of choirs and an associate professor

of conducting at the University of Michigan. Recently, he was named as the fifth Artistic Director of the two-time Grammy Award-winning ensemble, The Washington Chorus (Washington, D.C.).

### **Aundi Marie Moore, Soprano**

American soprano Aundi Moore has quickly established herself as an exceptional talent with her recent appearance as Strawberry Woman in the Metropolitan Opera's new production of *Porgy and Bess* last season. She is one of the 2023 recipients of the Sphinx Medal of Excellence, the highest honor bestowed by Sphinx. Previous career highlights on the opera stage include Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* at L'Opéra de Monte Carlo for her international operatic debut, Nedda in *I Pagliacci* at Sarasota Opera, Mimi in *La Bohème* in Italy at the Amalfi Coast Festival, Serena in *Porgy and Bess* at Atlanta Opera and at Virginia Opera, Young African American Soprano in Ricky Ian Gordon's world premiere of *Rappahannock County* at Virginia Opera, Soprano 2 in the US premiere of Michael Nyman's *Facing Goya* at Spoleto Festival, and the role of Odessa Clay in the world premiere of D. J. Sparr's *Approaching Ali* commissioned by the Washington National Opera.

A member of the Domingo-Cafritz Washington National Opera Young Artist Program, Moore appeared with WNO as Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Mother in *Hansel und Gretel*, Wanda in *Sophie's Choice*, Fifth Maid in *Elektra* under the baton of Heinz Fricke, and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* under the baton

of Plácido Domingo. She participated in the Salzburg Music Festival Young Artist Program in 2008 and covered the roles of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and the title role in *Rusalka* and appeared as a featured soloist in their Gala concert conducted by Ivor Bolton.

Future engagements include her debut in the role of Mother in Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's *Blue* at Toledo Opera.

### **The Washington Chorus**

The mission of The Washington Chorus (TWC) is to preserve and advance the art of choral singing and share the experience of the transforming power of choral music. TWC does this by performing at the highest artistic level in the nation's capital and before diverse national and international audiences, and by nurturing the next generation of choral singers.



# ABOUT WASHINGTON PERFORMING ARTS

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for more than half a century with artists, audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: for decades, in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we have presented a tremendous range of artists and art forms, from the most distinguished symphony orchestras to both renowned and emerging artists in classical music, gospel music, jazz, international genres, and more. Washington Performing Arts also has an ever-expanding artistic and educational presence on the internet, addressing the programming challenges of this time of pandemic while envisioning ongoing opportunities for online connection and community in a post-COVID world.

Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts

institutions. Through events online and in a myriad of performance venues and neighborhoods, Washington Performing Arts engages international visiting artists in community programs and introduces local artists to wider audiences. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through residencies and education programs.

For its achievements, Washington Performing Arts has been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with three Mayor's Arts Awards from the D.C. Government. We have now embarked upon our second half-century, ever inspired by the motto of our founder, Patrick Hayes: "Everybody in, nobody out."

For more information, please visit [washingtonperformingarts.org](http://washingtonperformingarts.org).

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Legacy Society members appreciate the vital role that performing arts play in the community, as well as in their own lives. By remembering Washington Performing Arts in their will or estate plans, members enhance our annual fund, endowment, or donor-designated programs and help make it possible for the next generations to enjoy the same quality and diversity of presentations both on stages and in our schools and community.

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Music Director,  
Washington Performing Arts  
Gospel Choirs ..... Anthony "Tony" Walker  
Artistic Director Emeritus,  
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