

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **VOCAL ARTS DC OFFERS AREA RECITAL DEBUTS IN 2022-2023**

### Presenter Lowers Ticket Prices in First Season of Live Concerts Since Pandemic

**Washington, DC (August 1, 2022)** Vocal Arts DC will present five singers in solo recitals during its 2022-2023 season at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Terrace Theater, the company's first full subscription series of concerts since the 2020 onset of the global pandemic. Four of the five singers will make area recital debuts; tenor **Lawrence Brownlee**, a favorite of Washington audiences, returns for his fifth recital since his first in 2006 under Vocal Arts DC's auspices, a celebration of contemporary Black composers showcasing all-new works.

The season opens on October 10, 2022 with tenor **Michael Spyres** and pianist **Mathieu Pordoy** performing Beethoven's *An die ferne geliebte*, Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été* and Liszt's *Three Petrarch Sonnets*. Tunisian-Canadian mezzo-soprano **Rihab Chaieb**, who won all hearts in her local operatic debut last season as Dorabella in Washington National Opera's *Così fan tutte*, follows in a program with pianist **Brian Zeger** on December 8. Their program will include Robert Schumann's *Maria Stuart-Lieder*, Maurice Ravel's song cycles *Chants Populaires* and *Shéhérazade*, selections by Georges Bizet, Louis Aubert and Osvaldo Golijov, the world premiere of works by Canadian composer Matthew Ricketts, and songs from Ms. Chaieb's Arabic heritage accompanied by guitar.

In collaboration with pianist **Chris Reynolds**, ascendant soprano **Emily Pogorelc**, a recent alumna of the Curtis Institute and Lyric Opera of Chicago's Ryan Opera Center, presents Vocal Arts DC's annual Gerald Perman Fund for Emerging Artists debut recital on February 19, featuring selections by Hugo Wolf, Lili Boulanger and Joseph Schwantner. For his recital on March 26 with pianist **Kevin J. Miller**, **Lawrence Brownlee** has conceived an original program featuring all-new works commissioned by some of today's leading Black composers set to poetry of the Harlem Renaissance. English-Jamaican soprano **Elizabeth Llewellyn** concludes the season on April 17 with pianist **Simon Lepper** in a program of songs by Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Mahler and the biracial Victorian-era composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Llewellyn has almost single-handedly returned Coleridge-Taylor's songs to currency through an acclaimed album devoted to his music on the Orchid Classics label as well as concerts showcasing them at London's Wigmore Hall, the Aldeburgh Festival and other leading concert venues.

Having rolled back ticket prices to the 2014-2015 season levels upon returning to live concerts early in 2022, Vocal Arts DC will keep that reduced price structure in effect throughout 2022-2023: a recital ticket at the full subscription price remains at \$40, while tickets for those who purchase a mini-series comprised of one ticket apiece to at least three of VADC's recitals will be \$45 each. All single tickets, available only through the Kennedy Center Box Office, will again be priced at \$50 each.

"Glad as we were to keep the momentum going throughout the pandemic with our season of virtual recitals, we are thrilled to return to the incomparable experience of presenting live acoustic music to an audience sharing the concert together as a community," said Vocal Arts DC General Director

Peter Russell. “Our season brings a mix of debut recitals by both internationally established artists and emerging newcomers, along with a welcome return by Washington favorite Lawrence Brownlee. With all the challenges posed by both the pandemic and inflation, our Board of Directors was adamant that we keep our ticket prices where they were eight years ago to make our concerts as attractive and affordable as possible.”

Full subscriptions (priced at \$200 each) and mini-series subscriptions (comprised of a minimum of three concerts priced at \$45 per ticket) are available for purchase online via the Vocal Arts DC website ([vocalartsdc.org/subscribe](https://vocalartsdc.org/subscribe)), by mail (download, print, complete and return the order form [here](#)) or by phone (202-669-1463). Single tickets are priced at \$50 each and are available beginning Monday, August 22 through the Kennedy Center Box Office. Order online at [www.Kennedy-Center.org](http://www.Kennedy-Center.org) or charge by phone at 202-467-4600.

### MORE ABOUT THE 2022-2023 ARTISTS

Described by London’s *Opera* magazine, as “a tenor who has the world at his feet,” American **Michael Spyres** has built an enviable international career since his 2013 area debut with Washington Concert Opera as Leicester in Donizetti’s *Maria Stuarda* during his formative years. With a growing discography and new productions at London’s Covent Garden, Milan’s Teatro alla Scala and the Vienna State Opera, Spyres has a unique vocal range that easily encompasses both the tenor and baritone ranges, allowing him to become the first singer in its history to record Berlioz’s song cycle *Les nuits d’été* in the composer’s original keys for a forthcoming release on the Erato label. He makes his Washington recital debut on October 10 in between Metropolitan Opera performances as the title character in a rare revival of Mozart’s *Idomeneo*, a production originally mounted in 1982 as a vehicle for Luciano Pavarotti.

Following her scene-stealing local debut this winter in Washington National Opera’s *Così fan tutte*, **Rihab Chaieb** co-starred as Nefertiti in the Metropolitan Opera’s acclaimed revival of Philip Glass’ *Akhmaten*, drawing praise from Joshua Barone in *The New York Times* for her “lush, vibrato-rich sound” and “assurance and ringing might.” A recent alumna of the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, she performs Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* for both LA Opera and Canadian Opera Company in the coming season as well as Ottavia in Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* at Paris’ Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. 2023 also marks the release of her performance as Penelope on a new commercial recording of Monteverdi’s *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* with Ensemble I Gemelli led by Emiliano Gonzalez Toro.

Since taking Washington National Opera audiences by storm when she stepped into the leading role of Cunegonde in Bernstein’s *Candide* on relatively short notice as an undergrad at Philadelphia’s Curtis Institute in 2018, **Emily Pogorelc** has graduated from Lyric Opera of Chicago’s prestigious Ryan Opera Center and joined Munich’s Bavarian State Opera, where her roles have included Adina in *L’elisir d’amore*, Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. She returns to the roster in Munich in the coming season as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel* and the title role in the company premier of Hosokawa’s *Matsukaze*. A winner in 2018 of the Glyndebourne Cup’s “Most Promising Singer” Award at age 21, she stars this summer at Glyndebourne as Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Tenor **Lawrence Brownlee** is far more than “one of the most in-demand singers today” (NPR), capable of singing seemingly anything from the traditional canon to works composed specifically for him (Tyshawn Sorey’s song cycle *Cycles of My Being* and Daniel Schnyder’s opera *Charlie Parker’s YardBird*). He has also become an activist voice for equality in the field of classical music through his weekly online Facebook program “The Sitdown with LB.” The list of Black composers whose works will be

represented by newly commissioned works on his March 26 recital with pianist Kevin J. Miller includes Valerie Capers, Jasmine Barnes, Carlos Simon, David Ragland, Shawn Ohkpeblo, Brittney Boykin, Brandon Spencer, Jessie Montgomery, Damien Sneed and Adolphus Hailstork.

Rich-voiced British-Jamaican soprano **Elizabeth Llewellyn** has enjoyed considerable success in opera at both the Met (as Gershwin's Bess) and English National Opera (title role in Verdi's *Luisa Miller*, among many roles with the company), but is equally lauded as a concert and recital singer whose engagements regularly take her to London's Wigmore Hall, the Aldeburgh Festival and the BBC Symphony, with whom she has recorded Elgar's *Caractacus* and Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony* for Hyperion conducted by Martyn Brabbins. *Gramophone* magazine praised as "irresistible" and "arresting" her album with pianist Simon Lepper on the Orchid Classics label devoted to the songs of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, which the artists will feature in their VADC recital.

### **Vocal Arts DC 2022-2023 Season at a Glance**

Michael Spyres, *tenor* and Mathieu Pordoy, *pianist*: Monday, October 10 @ 7:30pm  
Rihab Chaieb, *mezzo-soprano* and Brian Zeger, *pianist*: Thursday, December 8 @ 7:30pm  
Emily Pogorelc, *soprano* with Chris Reynolds, *pianist*: Sunday, February 19 @ 2:00pm  
Lawrence Brownlee, *tenor* with Kevin J. Miller, *pianist*: Sunday, March 26 @ 2:00pm  
Elizabeth Llewellyn, *soprano* with Simon Lepper, *pianist*: Monday, April 17 @ 7:30pm

These performances are external rentals presented in coordination with the Kennedy Center Campus Rentals Office and are not produced by the Kennedy Center.

All recitals are scheduled for the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater, 2700 F St. NW, Washington, DC 20566. All dates, programs and artists are subject to change.

### **COVID-19 SAFETY INFORMATION**

To ensure our patrons' health and security, as well as the safety of performers and staff, the Kennedy Center has implemented the following COVID policy effective in May of 2022. Please note that, as the pandemic progresses, this policy may be modified prior to the date of Vocal Arts DC's first scheduled recital in October of this year:

- Masks are required at all times for all patrons in all indoor spaces while in the building, except when eating or drinking in approved areas. All spaces will be operating at full capacity, meaning there will be no physical distancing within the Terrace Theater and you will have patrons sitting directly next to, in front of and behind you.
- Ticket holders who do not comply with this policy will not be admitted.
- Review the full policy details and check regularly for policy updates at [www.Kennedy-Center.org/COVIDsafety](http://www.Kennedy-Center.org/COVIDsafety).

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**Vocal Arts DC** presents a full season of classical song recitals by some of the world's finest singers at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater. Our performances are supplemented by educational and social events that foster personal contacts between performers, composers and audience members. Typically showcasing a single classically-trained singer and a world-class pianist unaided by amplification, our concerts cover a wide range of the world's great song literature, increasingly including newly composed works commissioned by our performers or by Vocal Arts DC itself.

<https://vocalartsdc.org/>