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Lift Every Voice

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Governors State University
Center for Performing Arts

presents

Lift Every Voice
An Operatic Celebration of Black History Month
Soprano Kimberly Jones
Tenor Cornelius Johnson

February 19, 2012

World-class singers performing opera classics in an intimate, on-stage setting

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council.

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The 2012 Season at GSU Center is sponsored by

First Midwest Bank
PROGRAM

Lift Every Voice and Sing
arr. James Weldon Johnson
Kimberly Jones and Cornelius Johnson

Treemonisha
The Sacred Tree
Wrong Is Never Right
Scott Joplin

Porgy and Bess
Summertime
Strawberry Woman
Honey Man/ Crabman
It Ain’t Necessarily So!
Mr. Johnson

Margaret’s Lullaby (from Margaret Garner)
Margaret Bonds
Ms. Jones

Women Composers (Poetry of Langston Hughes)
Minstrel Man
Joy
Delores White
Mr. Johnson

Margru’s aria (from Amistad)
Margaret Bonds
Ms. Jones

Lord How Come Me Here?
Ride On King Jesus!
Traditional
arr. Hall Johnson

Every Time I Feel The Spirit
Steal Away
This Little Light of Mine
arr. Harry T. Burleigh
arr. Harry T. Burleigh
arr. Hale Smith
Ms. Jones

Ragtime
Make Them Hear You
Wheels Of A Dream
Stephen Flaherty
Mr. Johnson
Ms. Jones and Mr. Johnson

Special Thanks to John Concepcione for his unfailing dedication in coordinating the OPERA UP CLOSE series at GSU Center.
Selections from *Treemonisha* by S. Joplin

**The Sacred Tree**  Monisha recalls the time of when she found the crying baby under the tree, who she then named Treemonisha... “One autumn night in bed I was lying, just eighteen years ago, I heard a dear little baby crying, while loudly Ned did snore! And the baby’s crying seemed to be somewhere near the sacred tree. I called to Ned and said, “Wake up, a baby is crying outside the door”. But Ned said, “You have dreamed enough” and went to sleep once more. Yet the baby’s crying seemed to be somewhere near that sacred tree...It was twelve o’clock, or just before, when the rain fell hard and fast, the baby’s cries I heard no more, it had gone to sleep at last. And very quiet it seemed to be, somewhere near that sacred tree. Ten o’clock next morning, the hot sun was shining, and the darling little baby I really had forgotten...but I could hear the humming bee. Somewhere near that sacred tree. I was busy in the cabin when to my surprise I plainly heard a noise, it was the baby’s cries. And as I listened it seemed to be, somewhere near that sacred tree. I came out in the yard to see, and find out where the child could be. And there in rags, the baby laid, sheltered by that tree’s cool shade. I found it where I thought it would be, there beside that sacred tree. I took the child into our home. And now the darling girl is grown. All I’ve said to you is true. The child I’ve told you of is YOU. Take not a leaf, but leave them be, on that dear old sacred tree. The rain or the burning sun, you see, would have sent you to your grave, but the sheltering leaves of that old tree your precious life did save. So now with me, you must agree, not to harm that sacred tree!”

Wrong Is Never Right

Selections from *Porgy and Bess* by G. Gershwin

**Summertime**  Summertime and the livin’ is easy, fish are jumpin and the cotton is high, oh yo’ daddy’s rich and yo’ ma is good lookin’, so hush lil baby, don’t you cry! One of these mornin’s, you’re gonna rise up singin’, then you’ll spread yo’ wings and you’ll take the sky, but til that mornin, there’s a nothin can harm you! With daddy and mammy standing by!

**Strawberry Woman**  Oh they so fresh and fine, and jus’ off the vine, strawberry!

Honey Man/ Crabman - It Ain’t Necessarily So!

(from *Margaret Garner* by R. Danielpour)

**Margaret’s Lullaby**  After a long day or toiling in the fields, the slaves return to their quarters for their meal. Margaret, her husband and others are in great spirits, and Margaret insists on seeing her baby. She is warned that she should not become too attached to her child, but she persists and sings a tender lullaby to her daughter... “Sad things far away, soft things, come and play, lovely baby.... Sleep in the meadow, sleep in the hay, baby’s got a dreamin’ on the way. Bad things far away, pretty things, here to stay, sweet baby, smile at me, lovely baby, go to sleep. Sleep in the meadow sleep in the hay, baby’s gonna dream the night away. Lovely baby, pretty baby. Baby’s gonna dream the night away. Sleep in the meadow, sleep in the hay, baby’s gonna dream...mmmmm.”

(M. Bonds/L. Hughes)  Minstrel Man

(D. White/L. Hughes)  Joy

(from *Amistad* by A. Davis)

**Margru’s aria**  The young girl, Margru, in jail with the other prisoners, recalls the horrible time when she was taken from her land, when she killed one of the sailors and had to leave her baby behind... “I could tell by their looks, their touches, the way they handled me, they wanted a girl. They thought I was a virgin, even these men here, call me the “girl” ....they think I’m a virgin! They got what they wanted - a slight girl, with slim hips and small breast, they don’t know I left a baby wrapped in cloth, waiting for his milk! He is lying in his cloth, on a pallet on the ground, under my mother’s gaze, in my house of grass, in a small round house on barren heartless soil where the wind blows all but the goats away. His cloth
was orange with seashells on it. I kept him wrapped tight to my back, except that afternoon, when I went for food! When they took me, my milk flowed down the dirt trails, down my legs and arms, on the rusty irons. And yes! I helped to kill the men, I cut one of the sailors in his chest! I was not afraid to die. I was afraid I could not get back, where I still live my life! I'm still caught in a step, on my way back, to a pallet on the ground..."

**Selected Spirituals**

*Lord How Come Me Here?* (traditional)

**Ride On King Jesus!** (arr. Johnson)
Ride on King Jesus, no man can hinder me!
For He is King of Kings, He is Lord of Lords,
Jesus Christ the first and last, no man works like Him!
King Jesus rides a milk white horse, no man works like Him!
The river of Jordan He did cross, no man works like Him!
For He is King of Kings, He is Lord of Lords,
King Jesus rides in the middle of the air...OH!
He calls the saints from everywhere!
Ride on King Jesus, no man can hinder me!
He is the King, He is the Lord! Yes!
Jesus Christ the first and last, no man works like Him!

*Every Time I Feel The Spirit* (arr. Burleigh)
Every time I feel the spirit, moving in my hear I will pray.
Upon the mountain, my Lord spoke, out of his mouth came, fire and smoke.
The Jordan River, chilly and cold, chill the body, but not the soul.
Every time I feel the spirit, etc.
All around me, look so shine, I ask the Lord if, all is mine.
There ain't but one train, runs this track, it runs to Heaven and runs right back.
Every time I feel the spirit, etc.

*Steal Away* (arr. Burleigh)
Steal away, to Jesus, steal away, home. I ain’t got long to stay here.
My Lord calls me, He calls me by the thunder.
The trumpet sounds within a my soul, I ain’t got long to stay here.
Green trees are bending , Poor sinner stands a trembling.
The trumpet sounds within a my soul, I ain’t got long to stay here.

*This Little Light of Mine* (arr. Smith)
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.
Everywhere I go, I’m gonna let it shine.
All through the night, I’m gonna let it shine!
Selections from *Ragtime* by S. Flaherty

**Make Them Hear You**

**Wheels of a Dream**

Coalhouse: I see his face, I hear his heartbeat, I look in those eyes, how wise they seem! Well when he is old enough, I will show him America! And we will ride on the wheels of a dream. We'll go down south
Sarah: go down south!
Coalhouse: and see your people
Sarah: See my folks
Coalhouse: Won't they take to him like cats to cream
Sarah: They'll take to him!
Coalhouse: Then we'll travel on from there
Sarah: California or who knows where
Both: and we will ride, on the wheels of a dream
Coalhouse: Yes the wheels are turning for us girl, and the times are starting to roll. Any man who can get where he wants to if he's got some fire in his soul! We'll see justice and plenty of men who will stand up and give us our due! Oh Sarah it's more than promises, Sarah it must be true! A country that lets a man like me, own a car, raise a child, build a life with you! With you!
Both: Beyond that road! Beyond this lifetime, that car full of hope will always gleam, with the promise of happiness, and the freedom he'll live to know. He'll travel with head held high, just as far as his heart can go! And he will ride on the wheels of a dream!

**Kimberly E. Jones**

Internationally acclaimed soprano Kimberly E. Jones is an alumna of the Ryan Opera Center with the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Her performances with the prestigious Lyric Opera of Chicago include the slave girl, Margru, in the world premiere of Anthony Davis’s *Amistad*, (just released on New World Records), the feisty Olga in *Fedora*, Princess Xenia in Boris Godunov, Pedro in Don Quichotte, and the spitfire Despina in student matinee performances of *Cosi Fan Tutte*. With the Ryan Opera Center, she portrayed the cunning Laetitia in the Old Maid and the Thief. Additionally, this soprano impressed audiences at Grant Park with her touching Zerlina (Don Giovanni) and Adele (Die Fledermaus). Kimberly performed in Houston Grand Opera’s colorful production of the Magic Flute (Papagena) and again as Xenia in Boris Godunov. Also with Houston, she participated in their production of Porgy and Bess, as Clara. This tour graced the international stages of La Scala in Milan, the Bastille in Paris, and the Bunkamura with Tokyo Philharmonic. She was presented in Lyric Opera Cleveland’s magical production of John Adams’ ‘I Was Looking at the Ceiling and then I saw the sky’. She received rave reviews for her Composer in Mozart’s Jewel Box with the Chicago Opera Theatre, and triumphed with her Connecticut Opera debut as Fiordiligi in *Cosi*. With Lyric’s “Opera in the Neighborhoods”, her performances include Rosina in the Barber of Seville and the title role of Cenerentola. Kimberly’s concert appearances include the Philip Glass Symphony #5 at the Gewandhaus, in Leipzig, Germany, under Maestro Dennis Russell Davies’ baton. She also performed this work with the Stuttgart and Danish Radio Symphonies, in Ludwigsburg, Germany and Copenhagen, Denmark, as well as the Philharmonic of Orange County and Brooklyn Academy of Music. With the Madison Symphony, she has performed Handel Messiahs, her first Mahler’s Second Symphony, and Christmas Pops concerts. She has also appeared in concert with the Ravinia Festival (Bourgeois Gentilhomme) and Richmond Symphony (Knoxville: Summer of 1915). She captivated audiences in her Alice Tully Hall debut with the Little Orchestra Society in an evening of Vivaldi ensembles and arias. Lyric Opera of Chicago’s former artistic director, Maestro Bruno Bartoletti, selected her to appear with the Orchestra della Toscana in Florence, La Spezia and Piombino in Italy, performing the Knoxville Summer of 1915. She was one of four Ryan Opera Center artists showcased in a series of concerts at the Chatelet in Paris, France. She has received awards from Baltimore Opera, has received a George London grant, two Sullivan grants, was nominated for the Richard Tucker award, received
the Licia Albanese Encouragement Award, and she received three grants from the MacAllister Awards Competition. She was the winner of the Union League Competition. She was awarded the Richard Gold Career grant from Lyric Opera of Chicago, and was presented in Opera Now’s “Who’s Hot in Opera” edition by the late Ardis Krainik. For her portrayal of Clara in Porgy and Bess, she was nominated for the NAACP Awards for Best Supporting Actress.

She has performed with Broadway baritone Leon Williams at the Bruno Walter Auditorium at Lincoln Center, in an evening of Porgy and Bess solos and duets. She has performed with the North Shore Symphony (Haydn’s Mass and Argento’s Jonah and the Whale). With Rockford Symphony, she sang her first Carmina Burana, as well as the Haydn Creation. She has performed with the Chicago Youth Symphony (Ticheli’s American Dream), was a soloist with the Cube Contemporary Ensemble, (songs of Dorothy Rudd Moore) and was invited to perform in the New Works Sampler at the Opera America Annual Conference in Atlanta (works of Michael Ching, Hugo Weisgall and John Adams). She has performed numerous times at Preston Bradley Hall, including a radio broadcast of the Dame Myra Hess concert, and a Negro spirituals concert with Emmy award winning actress, Irma P. Hall. Mozart’s Exultate, Jubilate and Bach Magnificat were presented during a local telecast from Glenview. A performance of Bach’s Coffee cantata was followed by a Christmas Pops concerts with Elgin Symphony. For the opening weekend of Millennium Park, she was presented in an afternoon of duets and arias. More Messiahs followed with Illinois Symphony and Michigan City, as well as another Mahler’s Second at Mandel Hall at University of Chicago.

Kim was presented on WFMT’s Live from Studio One program, with songs of Edith Lejet and Janice Misurell. She has performed with the LaPorte Symphony’s Evening at the Pops. She has made her debut with the Michigan City Chamber Music Festival, singing Faure songs, Chausson’s Chanson Perpetuelle, Massenet’s Elegie, and Schubert’s Shepherd on the Rock. She returned singing Mozart and Puccini arias and duets. Appearances have included Messiahs with Michigan City and New Buffalo Symphony, and a Christmas Pops concert with DuPage Symphony. Most recent engagements include a recital of Sherwood Conservatory, featuring works by African American composers Hale Smith and Delores White, (which were repeated last summer at the National Association of Negro Musicians convention), and more local Messiahs. She has performed twice at the DuSable Museum for the Three Soprano concerts. For two seasons she was showcased in Lyric Opera’s Meet The Artist, a one woman show presented to the schools in the Illinois area about the life of an opera singer, which she will reprise this February. She returned to the Cultural Center’s Preston Bradley Hall a concert, “Classical Valentine”. Other appearances have included a return engagement to Michigan City’s Chamber Music Festival, for performances of Carmen arias and duets, and selections from Haydn’s Creation, and select Barber’s Hermit songs. She was the soprano soloist in Vaughn Williams’ Sea Symphony at Mandel Hall, and was Donzella for McKenna Ensemble’s Comica del Cielo. Messiah is one of her favorite oratorios she frequently performs, last year with the Grand Rapids Symphony and this year at Rockefeller Chapel. This year performances included an early music program at Rockefeller Chapel, a Brahms Requiem again at Mandel Hall, and a show tunes concert in Park Ridge with baritone Jeff Ray. With the Elmhurst Chorale, she performed solos in the Mozart Requiem, Exultate Jubilate and Regina Coeli. She was invited to sing a recital at UIC with accompanist and conductor, Francesco Milioto. She reprised her role of Rosina with the Opera in the Neighborhoods. Upcoming performances include another Brahms Requiem with Chicago Community Chorus and several modern music concerts at several Chicago area churches. Miss Jones is on the voice faculty at Merit School of Music and Sherwood Conservatory of Music with Columbia College, as well as DePaul University.

**Cornelius Johnson**

Internationally acclaimed tenor Cornelius Johnson quickly gained attention as an artist in opera, concert, and as a recitalist. Mr. Johnson made his professional solo operatic debut as Peter the Honeymoon in Houston Grand Opera’s production of Porgy and Bess. This international tour graced the stages of the Opera Bastille in Paris, La Scala in Milan, and the Bunkamura Theater, with the Tokyo Philharmonic. Additional performances of Porgy and Bess have included Shreveport Opera, Teatro Real, Madrid, and was seen as Sporting Life with the Wheaton Symphony Orchestra and the South Shore Opera Company of Chicago.
Recent performances include, an evening of Mozart arias and ensembles with the New Millennium Chamber Ensemble, Beethoven’s Christ on the Mount of Olives at Abyssinian Church in New York, Puccini Arias at Northern Illinois University, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the Allegro Chorale and Orchestra, and Mozart’s Requiem with the Elmhurst Choral Union. With Elgin Opera he has been seen as Rodolfo in scenes from La Boheme, was a featured soloist in L’amour Toujour l’amour, a French Opera Gala, and on a Taste of Italy, an Italian Opera Gala, accompanied by the New Millennium Orchestra. With Chamber Opera Chicago Cornelius has performed in Man of La Mancha, and on a Gian Carlo Menotti Tribute concert. At the Chicago Cultural Center, he was heard as, Haroun in the rarely heard Djamilieh by Bizet, and Don José in Carmen, presented by South Shore Opera of Chicago. Cornelius has also performed the role of Don José in Carmen at the Ravinia Music Festival with Opera Theater North and with the Resident Artist Program at Opera Memphis. Also at Opera Memphis, Cornelius performed Il Maestro di Ballo in Manon Lescaut. Other operatic highlights include Tamino in The Magic Flute with Lyric Opera of Chicago’s “Opera In The Neighborhoods” and with Connecticut Opera Express. In two consecutive seasons he performed John Still in She Never Lost a Passenger with the Syracuse Opera Ensemble. While a member of the Chautauqua Opera Studio Artist Program he performed in scenes as Des Grieux in Manon, and Prunier in La Rodine. He was heard as Ernesto in Don Pasquale with the Lake George Opera Festival Apprentice Artist Program.

Cornelius' concert appearances include, Handel’s Messiah with the Chicago Chamber Orchestra; the Michigan City Community Orchestra; and several churches throughout the country. He has also performed Mozart’s Missa Brevis with the Racine Symphony Orchestra. He has performed Haydn’s Heilig-Messe (Mass in Bb) and Robert Ray’s Gospel Mass with Harper College Festival Chorus and Orchestra. A versatile artist, Cornelius has performed at Chicago’s Millennium Park on three occasions; the opening weekend celebration in a concert of Arias and Duets; in “Sondheim in the Park”; and at Chicago’s famed Gospel Fest at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion. He has delighted audiences across the country in several recital performances. Some have included performances at the Smithsonian Institute, the Yale Museum of Art, Atlanta’s Symphony Center, Morehouse College, and various chapters of Lyric Opera of Chicago. A native of Chicago, Mr. Johnson received his Master of Music Degree from Northwestern University and his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Morehouse College.

COMING APRIL 14 TO GSU CENTER!!
Bixbee invites audiences to join him on an adventure of a lifetime as he tries to save the rainforest. Through the use of magic, puppetry, vibrant musical numbers, comedy, audience participation, and a menagerie of LIVE exotic animals, Bixby’s Rainforest Rescue offers families an unforgettable and entertaining experience. In addition to the show, families are able to closely view the animal friends of the rainforest, with Bixby's Rainforest Encounters. Bixby has invited different species of his rainforest animal friends to join him during a pre-show adventure! Families can join: Archie the two-toed sloth, Maddie the endangered ring-tailed lemur, Jumps the red-eyed tree frog, along with various other live animal friends in the lobby 1 hour prior to the show. This unique exhibit gives families an opportunity to see animals from across the globe without leaving the theatre. Throughout the display, families will enjoy learning interesting facts about each animal.