



with assistance from
MRS. BETH INGRAM AND
THE INGRAM FAMILY FOUNDATION
presents

**OUR SONG, OUR STORY: THE NEW
GENERATION OF BLACK VOICES**
WITH MUSICAL DIRECTION BY DAMIEN SNEED

**The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation
is the sponsor of our 58th Season.**

This evening marks Damien Sneed's second and Ms. McMillon and Ms. Bryce-Davis' first appearance with the Series. This also marks Ms. McMillon and Ms. Bryce-Davis' Kansas City debuts.

6:00 P.M., SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022
FOLLY THEATER
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

*Founded by William Jewell College in 1965, Harriman-Jewell Series' commitment to Kansas City
has been to bring the best of the performing arts.*

OUR SONG, OUR STORY

Damien Sneed, music director and piano

Raven McMillon, soprano

Raehann Bryce-Davis, mezzo-soprano

Griot String Quartet

Amyr Joyner, violin

Julius Adams, violin

Edward Hardy, viola

Thapelo Masita, cello

This presentation will be performed without an intermission.

OPENING

Evocation

Damien Sneed, piano

HALE SMITH
(1925–2009)

SPIRITUALS

In That Great Gettin' Up Morning

TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL
arr. DAMIEN SNEED
(1979–present)

Balm in Gilead

Raven McMillon

TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL
arr. SNEED

Ride On, King Jesus

Raehann Bryce-Davis

TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL
arr. HALL JOHNSON
(1888–1970)

Scandalized My Name

TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL
arr. SNEED

OPERA ARIAS

"Caro nome che il mio cor (Sweet name, that made my heart)" from *Rigoletto*

Raven McMillon

GIUSEPPE VERDI
(1813–1901)

Damien Sneed *Our Song, Our Story* appears by arrangement with IMG Artists, LLC
7 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019. 212-994-2500 www.imgartists.com

As an auxiliary organization of William Jewell College, the Harriman-Jewell Series adheres to the anti-harassment policy of the College, and is committed to maintaining an environment that is free of harassment, illegal discrimination, and unprofessional conduct. In keeping with the policy, any form of harassment by or against any person is prohibited, whether such harassment is lawful or unlawful. This policy applies to all patrons, venue staff, Series staff, performing artists, artist representatives, and third-party vendors. To report harassment, either speak to a Harriman-Jewell Series staff member, email the Series at info@hjseries.org, or call 816-415-5025.

"O don fatale (Oh, fatal gift)" from *Don Carlo* VERDI
Raehann Bryce-Davis

"Quando me'n vo (As I go alone)" from *La bohème* GIACOMO PUCCINI
Raven McMillon (1858–1924)

"I was a constant, faithful wife" from *The Bear* WILLIAM WALTON
Raehann Bryce-Davis (1902–1983)

OPERA DUETS

"Belle nuit (Lovely night)" from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* JACQUES OFFENBACH
(1819–1880)

"Evening Prayer" from *Hansel and Gretel* ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK
(1854–1921)

STRING QUARTET

String Quartet, No. 1 "Calvary" – Allegro COLERIDGE-TAYLOR PERKINSON
Griot String Quartet (1932–2004)

LIEDER

Nacht und Träume (Night and Dreams) FRANZ SCHUBERT
Raven McMillon (1797–1828)

Widmung (Dedication), Op. 25, No. 1 ROBERT SCHUMANN
Raehann Bryce-Davis (1810–1856)

Kornblumen (Cornflowers), Op. 22, No. 1 RICHARD STRAUSS
Raven McMillon (1864–1969)

Chanson perpétuelle (Perpetual song), Op. 37 ERNEST CHAUSSON
Raehann Bryce-Davis (1855–1899)

BLACK COMPOSERS

Among the Fuchsias HARRY T. BURLEIGH
Raven McMillon (1866–1949)

Till I Wake BURLEIGH
Raven McMillon

We Wear The Mask B.E. BOYKIN
Raehann Bryce-Davis (1989–present)

Nobody's Business PETER ASHBOURNE
Raehann Bryce-Davis (1950–present)

He's Got The Whole World In His Hands TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL
arr. SNEED

DAMIEN SNEED MUSIC DIRECTOR, PIANO



credit: Photography by Starlic

■ 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 jazz, classical, pop, and R&B legends, including the late Aretha Franklin and Jessye Norman, and he is featured on Norman's final recording, *Bound For The Promised Land* on Albany Records. He has worked with Wynton Marsalis, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Ashford & Simpson, J'Nai Bridges, Lawrence Brownlee, Brandie Inez Sutton, and many others. Sneed 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 is a 2020 Dove Award winner and 2021 NAACP Image Award winner for his work as a featured producer and writer on the Clark Sisters' newest project, *The Return*, released on March 13, 2020.

In January 2020, he embarked on his 40-city North American tour, *We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, featuring Damien Sneed. In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Sneed brought his brand of classical, jazz, and sanctified soul to venues across the country during Dr. King's holiday, Black History Month, and Women's Month. Also 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.

Sneed has performed at important national and international events, including the 2012 Olympics in London and activities related to

the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Sneed performed in Washington, DC, at *Celebration of America* at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Art's Eisenhower Theater on the eve of President Obama's inauguration and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in 2013. In 2008, he conducted the world premiere of Wynton Marsalis' *Abyssinian Mass* with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and a 150-voice choir. He has also conducted the *Mass* in London and on a 16-city U.S. tour.

An acclaimed artist with a global reach, Sneed has performed in Europe, Japan, the U.S. Virgin Islands, South America, Africa, and over 42 states in the United States. He has performed with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Minneapolis Symphony, Darin Atwater and Soulful Symphony, Opera Ebony, and Opera Noire. He has collaborated with award-winning opera singer Jessye Norman on several performances.

A recipient of a 2014 Sphinx Medal of Excellence and a graduate of John S. Davidson Fine Arts School in his hometown of Augusta, GA, Sneed studied at some of the finest conservatories and universities, including Howard University, where he earned a Bachelor of Music – Piano Performance; the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University; New York University, where he earned a Master of Music in Music Technology: Scoring for Film and Multimedia; and the Manhattan School of Music. Sneed graduated with his doctorate in Orchestral Conducting from USC in May 2021.

On September 15, 2020, Sneed performed on BLACK OPERA's Jessye Norman 75th Birthday virtual gala as Ms. Norman's mentee and artistic collaborator. The 90-minute virtual gala

celebrated Ms. Norman's life and artistry with countless performances and dedications from across the country, as well as performances filmed on-site in the Winter Garden at Brookfield Place.

Alvin Ailey Dance Theater commissioned Sneed to create an original score for *Testament*, a contemporary response to the 60th Anniversary of *Revelations* for the dance company's first virtual season which premiered on December 17, 2020. He was commissioned by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis to compose a chamber opera, *The Tongue & The Lash*, with libretto by Karen Chilton imagining a post-debate conversation between James Baldwin and William Buckley which premiered on June 10, 2021.

In 2022, Sneed was commissioned by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis to compose a reimagined adaptation of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* which will premiere on May 20, 2023 to open OTSL's season. On June 17, 2022, Sneed will conduct Nathaniel Dett's *Ordering of Moses* at Cathedral of Saint John the Divine with a 50-piece orchestra and his 75-piece choral group, Chorale Le Chateau, to commemorate the Harlem Renaissance centennial. He will conduct the Flint Symphony Orchestra several times during the 2022–2023 season for their Pops concerts featuring Patti Austin and others. Sneed also has performances with Denyce Graves, Lawrence Brownlee, Morris Robinson and other Metropolitan Opera singers during the upcoming 2022–2023 season as well as a tour *Our Song Our Story* which is an evening of operatic arias, art songs and spirituals featuring Justin Austin, Raehann Bryce-Davis and Raven McMillon accompanied by a string quartet with Sneed on piano.

RAVEN MCMILLON, SOPRANO



■ Soprano Raven McMillon is a native of Baltimore, MD. Recently, Ms. McMillon was named a 2021 Grand Finals Winner of the Metropolitan Opera's Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition. She returns to Houston Grand Opera as a second year studio artist for their 2021–2022 season as Frasquita in *Carmen*, Peter in Joel Thompson's *The Snowy Day*, and Papagena in *The Magic Flute*. Elsewhere, she makes her house and role debut at Opera Philadelphia as Gilda in *Rigoletto*.

In the summer of 2021, Ms. 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 2020–2021 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*. Ms. McMillon also performed as a soloist in the Giving Voice concert as well as the HGO Studio Recitals.

In 2020, Ms. McMillon collaborated with Lyric Opera of the North as Trish in the company's chapter in Decameron Opera 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). Ms. 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*.

Ms. McMillon received her MM Vocal Performance at the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music and her BFA in Vocal Performance at Carnegie Mellon University.

JOIN US!



1,000th Concert Celebration
with
Pretty Yende, soprano

Saturday, January 7, 2023, 6 pm
Folly Theater

hjseries.org | 816.415.5025

RAEHANN BRYCE-DAVIS, MEZZO-SOPRANO



■ Hailed by the *New York Times* as a "striking mezzo soprano" and by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for her "electrifying sense of fearlessness," in the 2019–20 season she made several role and company debuts including Eboli in *Don Carlos* with both Opera Vlaanderen and Staatstheater Nürnberg, and Sara in *Roberto Devereux* and the Big Stone in in the World Premiere of Aucoin and Ruhl's *Eurydice* with LA Opera, a coproduction with The Metropolitan Opera. She also debuted with Bard Summerscape as Genièvre in Chausson's *Le roi Arthus*, joined the Montreal Symphony for Verdi's Requiem, returned to Carnegie Hall for the world premiere of Moravec's *A Nation of Others* with the Oratorio Society of New York, joined the Dallas Opera for the Hart Institute for Women Conductors Concert, sang Nathaniel Dett's *The Ordering of Moses* for the centennial of the Harlem Renaissance, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with St. George's Choral Society, and a recital series with pianist Mark Markham.

On the concert stage, Ms. Bryce-Davis recently sang Elgar's *Sea Pictures* at the Musikverein in

Vienna, the world premiere of Paul Moravec's *Sanctuary Road* in her Carnegie Hall debut with Oratorio Society of New York, and Verdi's Requiem with both the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica and the Greenwich Village Orchestra. She also joined the Aspen Music Festival for John Corigliano's *Of Rage and Remembrance*, Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in a world premiere organ transcription at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, Verdi's Requiem with Marywood University, Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* with the Manhattan School of Music Symphony, and Duruflé's Requiem and Handel's *Messiah* with the Metro Chamber Orchestra. Also an ardent proponent of contemporary music, she premiered composer Kyle Werner's *Psalm 42*, and sang the world premiere of *Four Songs for Mezzo Soprano and Orchestra* by Jacob A. Greenberg.

Ms. Bryce-Davis is a 2018 recipient of the prestigious George London Award, the 2017 1st Place and Audience Prize-winner of the Concorso Lirico Internazionale di Portofino competition, a Prize Winner of the 2016 International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition and Winner of the 2016 Richard F. Gold Career Grant, the 2015 9th International Hilde Zadek Competition at the Musikverein in Vienna, the 2015 Metropolitan Opera National Council Pittsburgh District, and the 2015 Sedat Gürel - Güzin Gürel International Voice Competition in Istanbul. In addition to winning the Zadek competition in Vienna, she also walked away with the Supporters and Sponsors Prize, the Media Jury prize, a master class with Christa Ludwig, and a gala concert at Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe in Germany. She holds a Master of Music and Professional Studies certificate from the Manhattan School of Music and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Texas at Arlington.