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PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
announces**

2021-2022 Season

Fortas Chamber Music Concerts

**Highlights include eight commissioned works, a world premiere, the return
of the Tallis Scholars, and a co-presentation of
Sphinx Symphony Orchestra in its 25th anniversary season**

(WASHINGTON)— The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces programming for the 2021–2022 season of Fortas Chamber Music Concerts, the series’s 40th season and 25th under the leadership of artistic director and pianist Joseph Kalichstein. This season will feature performances that were originally scheduled for the 2019–2020 season, and exciting new programs including the return of the Tallis Scholars, and the Washington debut of the renowned Sphinx Symphony Orchestra, which celebrates its 25th anniversary.

Representing the best of the genre with artists from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, the season offers 10 performances in 2021–2022, with repertoire spanning from Mozart, Debussy, Ravel, to Brahms, Schumann, and Schubert. Additionally, the season will include works by an array of celebrated American composers—from the late Samuel Barber and André Previn to the young luminary Jessie Montgomery, along with John Harbison, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Richard Danielpour, David Lang, and more. Performances will include eight new works, four of which were commissioned through Music Accord, a consortium of U.S. presenters dedicated to the creation of new music, of which the Kennedy Center is a member. Also throughout the season, audiences will have a chance to hear works from contemporary composers Bryce Dessner and Carlos Simon, the Center’s Composer-in-Residence. Simon’s works also appear across the Center in programming by Washington National Opera and the National Symphony Orchestra.

“To say that I am thrilled that we are finally coming back to live concerts full-time is a huge understatement,” said Joseph Kalichstein. “That it coincides with the Center’s 50th anniversary and with the 25th anniversary of the esteemed Sphinx Organization— now with their full-size orchestra— makes is even more celebratory! We are, again, presenting many world premieres

and other commissioned pieces from the pens of our greatest composers, including André Previn's last work, *Penelope*, and a new work from Carlos Simon, the brilliant young musician who is the Center's new Composer-in-Residence. All that, plus the best string quartets and three magnificent singers."

2021–2022 Fortas Chamber Music Season Schedule

All concerts take place in the Terrace Theater unless otherwise noted.

The Dover Quartet & Haochen Zhang

Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

Marking their second season as the Kennedy Center's Quartet-in-Residence, the Dover Quartet joins forces with pianist Haochen Zhang to launch the Fortas season with a performance of a Kennedy Center commission (*Music Accord*) by Marc Neikrug. The Dover continues to make waves in the chamber music field and returns to the Center to show their distinct style. Rising pianist Haochen Zhang, a Gold Medal Winner at the 13th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2009, is "a musician of extraordinary technical mastery and perception" (*New York Arts*).

Joel Link, violin

Bryan Lee, violin

Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, viola

Camden Shaw, cello

Haochen Zhang, piano

Franz Schubert

Quartettsatz, Quartet Movement in C Minor, D 703

Marc Neikrug

Commission for Piano Quintet

Kennedy Center Commission (*Music Accord*)

Felix Mendelssohn

Quartet in D Major, Op. 44, No. 1

Susan Graham & Music from Copland House

Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

Grammy Award®-winning mezzo-soprano Susan Graham takes a musical journey through America's rich past with the "excellent musicians" (*The Chicago Tribune*) of the Music from Copland House Ensemble. The Kennedy Center-commissioned (*Music Accord*) centerpiece of the evening highlights a major collaboration between Grammy®-winning composer Richard Danielpour and author and former U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove. Specifically written for Susan

Graham and the ensemble, *A Standing Witness* is song cycle that chronicles our history from the 1960s to today. *Co-presented with Renée Fleming VOICES.*

Susan Graham, mezzo-soprano

Music from Copland House Ensemble

KENNEDY CENTER DEBUT

Pierre Jalbert *Crossings*

John Harbison Selections from *Songs America Loves to Sing*

Richard Danielpour *A Standing Witness*
Kennedy Center Commission (Music Accord)

String Quintets from Danielpour & Schubert

Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Violist Hsin-Yun Huang joins two husband-and-wife teams—Keith Robinson and Cathy Meng of the Miami String Quartet and Jaime Laredo and Sharon Robinson of the Kennedy Center’s resident trio—for the rarer cello quintet configuration in a new Kennedy Center co-commissioned work by Richard Danielpour. A hit at the 2019 Music from Angel Fires festival in Santa Fe, Danielpour’s string quintet pairs well with a string quintet by Schubert. The program also features a duo by the revolutionary Czech composer Erwin Schulhoff whose work broke stylistic boundaries, but his career was sadly cut short by his premature death in the Wülzburg concentration camp in 1942.

Jaime Laredo, violin

Cathy Meng, violin

Hsin-Yun Huang, viola

Sharon Robinson, cello

Keith Robinson, cello

Erwin Schulhoff Duo for Violin and Cello

Richard Danielpour *A Shattered Vessel*, String Quintet
Kennedy Center Co-Commission

Franz Schubert String Quintet in C Major, D 956, Op. (post) 63

Sphinx Symphony Orchestra

Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 8 p.m.

Part of the Sphinx Organization, now celebrating its 25th anniversary, the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra is a unique all-Black and -Latinx orchestra comprised of top professionals from around the country, including past and current members of the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, and Los Angeles Philharmonic, and faculty members of leading music institutions. The program will include *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, a moving work by Joel Thompson about seven African American men killed by police or authority figures. Each of the seven movements quotes their last words before they were killed. The program will also feature a commissioned work by newly appointed Kennedy Center Composer-in-Residence Carlos Simon.

A co-presentation of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts & Washington Performing Arts, in cooperation with The Washington Chorus

Sphinx Symphony Orchestra

Tito Muñoz, conductor

EXIGENCE Vocal Ensemble

Eugene Rogers, Music Director

J’Nai Bridges, mezzo-soprano

Members of The Washington Chorus

Eugene Rogers, Artistic Director

Carlos Simon, Composer-in-Residence

Sphinx Symphony Orchestra Commission

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Ballade for Orchestra

Valerie Coleman

Seven O’clock Shout

Traditional, Arr. Augustus Hill

Fix Me, Jesus (featuring J’Nai Bridges)

Carlos Cordero

Holding Our Breath

Joel Thompson

Seven Last Words of the Unarmed

John Legend/Common, Arr. Eugene Rogers

“Glory” from *Selma*

**Renée Fleming & Emerson String Quartet
with Simone Dinnerstein, piano
and Special Guest Uma Thurman
Monday, February 28, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.**

The Grammy Award®-winning Emerson String Quartet reunites with Kennedy Center Artistic Advisor at Large Renée Fleming for another “rapturous recital” (*The Washington Post*) after their successful collaboration on the 2015–2016 chamber music season. At the center of the evening is *Penelope*, a new Kennedy Center co-commissioned monodrama inspired by Homer’s *The Odyssey* from the late Academy Award®-winning composer André Previn with libretto by playwright Tom Stoppard. This new work features pianist Simone Dinnerstein and narration by Academy Award®-nominated actress Uma Thurman. *Co-presented with Renée Fleming VOICES.*

Philip Setzer, violin

Eugene Drucker, violin

Lawrence Dutton, viola

Paul Watkins, cello

Renée Fleming, soprano

Simone Dinnerstein, piano

Uma Thurman, narrator

Samuel Barber

String Quartet in B Minor, Op. 11

William Walton

String Quartet in A Major

André Previn/Tom Stoppard

Penelope

Kennedy Center Co-Commission

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio & David Shifrin

Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

The Center’s beloved trio-in-residence and musical legend clarinetist David Shifrin come together for a special concert featuring a deeply meaningful and poignant program. A leader across many institutions, including the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Yale School of Music, Shifrin’s “seasoned mastery” (*Gramophone Magazine*) has made him an icon. Audiences will experience the Washington, D.C. premiere of *Abgang and Kaddish*, composed by Pulitzer Prize winner Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, and inspired by Olivier Messiaen’s *Quartet for the End of Time*.

Joseph Kalichstein, piano

Jaime Laredo, violin

Sharon Robinson, cello

David Shifrin, clarinet

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Piano Trio in B-flat, K 502

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich

Abgang and Kaddish (2019)
for Piano Trio and Clarinet

Johannes Brahms

Piano Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8
(revised version)

Harlem Quartet & Joseph Kalichstein

Wednesday, March 30, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Founded in 2006 by The Sphinx Organization, now celebrating its 25th anniversary, Harlem Quartet advances diversity in classical music while engaging new audiences with varied repertoire that includes works by minority composers. Currently quartet-in-residence at London's Royal College of Music, their mission to share their passion with a wider audience has taken them around the world. Returning to the Terrace Theater following their Fortas appearance in 2016 with Aldo López-Gavilán, they are joined this time by our own Joseph Kalichstein for Schumann's Piano Quintet, a major work of 19th-century chamber music.

Illmar Gavilan, violin

Melissa White, violin

Jaime Amador, viola

Felix Umansky, cello

Joseph Kalichstein, piano

Claude Debussy

String Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10

Jessie Montgomery

Strum

Robert Schumann

Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44

Takács Quartet & Julien Labro

Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Following a triumphant recital of Bartók's cycle in 2019, the Grammy®-winning Takács Quartet returns for the 2021–2022 Fortas season with a program that features two new works for quintet by Bryce Dessner and Clarice Assad (both Kennedy Center commissions through Music Accord). Featured guest bandoneón player Julien Labro is “triple threat: brilliant technician, poetic melodist, and cunning arranger” (*Chicago Tribune*).

Edward Dusinberre, violin

Harumi Rhodes, violin

Richard O'Neill, viola

Andrá Fejér, cello

Julian Labro, bandoneón

Bryce Dessner

New Work for Quintet
Kennedy Center Commission

(Music Accord)

Julien Labro solo set

Maurice Ravel

String Quartet in F Major

Clarice Assad

New Work for Quintet
Kennedy Center Commission
(Music Accord)

The Tallis Scholars

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

After their last sold-out performance in 2018, The Tallis Scholars, return to the Terrace Theater with richly textured vocal music from the Renaissance along with a contemporary world premiere. Twelve singers will present Antoine Brumel's *Missa Et Ecce terræ motus* ("Earthquake Mass") along with a world premiere of *sun-centered*, a Kennedy Center co-commission by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Lang. The new piece, written to be performed alongside the Brumel work whose title means "and the earth moved," reminded Lang of Galileo. After being tried for blasphemy for proving the earth revolves around the sun, Galileo apparently muttered "and yet it moves!" The work begins with Galileo but soon finds other ways to examine the beauty and relentless nature of human curiosity, and the perils of suppressing it.

Peter Phillips, director

Antoine Brumel

Missa Et Ecce terræ motus
("Earthquake Mass")

David Lang

sun-centered (World Premiere)
Kennedy Center Co-Commission

FUNDING CREDITS

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Artists and performances are subject to change.

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