

The Juilliard School
and
New York Festival of Song
present

NED AT 100: A Rorem Celebration

Sophia Baete, Mezzo-Soprano
Kerrigan Bigelow, Soprano
Michael Butler, Tenor
Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha, Baritone
Jack Hicks, Tenor
Jazmine Saunders, Soprano
Steven Blier, Pianist, Arranger, and Artistic Director of NYFOS
Jen Pitt, Stage Director
Francesco Barfoed, Pianist

Music Preparation: Steven Blier

Guest Coach: Andrew Garland

Thursday, January 18, 2024, 7:30pm
Peter Jay Sharp Theater

Setting Out

NED ROREM **From Whence Cometh Song?** from *Evidence of Things Not Seen*
(1923-2022) Kerrigan Bigelow, Sophia Baete, Michael Butler, and Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha

ROREM **Rain in Spring**
Sophia Baete

ROREM **A Journey**
Jack Hicks

ROREM **I Am Rose**
Jazmine Saunders

ROREM **Full of Life Now**
Michael Butler

Inspiration

FRANCIS POULENC **C**
(1899-1963) Jazmine Saunders

ROREM **The Lordly Hudson**
Kerrigan Bigelow

Lovers

- ROREM **Love**
Michael Butler
- ROREM **Life in a Love** (from *Evidence of Things Not Seen*)
Sophia Baete and Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha
- ROREM **A Glimpse** (from *Evidence of Things Not Seen*)
Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha

Friends and Teachers

- THEODORE CHANLER (1902-61) **These, My Ophelia**
Michael Butler
- AARON COPLAND (1900-90) **Dear March, Come In!** (from *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*)
Jazmine Saunders
- VIRGIL THOMSON (1896-1989) **Sigh No More, Ladies** (from *Shakespeare Songs*)
Kerrigan Bigelow

Intermission

War

- ROREM **The Comfort of Friends** (from *Evidence of Things Not Seen*)
Sophia Baete
- MARC BLITZSTEIN (1905-64) **Emily (The Ballad of the Bombardier)** (from *The Airborne Symphony*)
Jack Hicks
- SAMUEL BARBER (1910-81) **I Hear an Army**
Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha

Intimates

- LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918-90) **Sonnet XLIII: What Lips My Lips Have Kissed** (from *Songfest*)
Sophia Baete
- PAUL BOWLES (1910-99) **Once a Lady Was Here**
Jack Hicks

Envoi

- ROREM **Come In** (from *Evidence of Things Not Seen*)
Jazmine Saunders

ROREM	Little Elegy Michael Butler
ROREM	A Birthday (from <i>Women's Voices</i>) Kerrigan Bigelow
ROREM	My Sad Captains Jazmine Saunders, Sophia Baete, Michael Butler, and Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha
ROREM	Alleluia Kerrigan Bigelow and Jack Hicks

Running time: approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes, including an intermission

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About the Program

by Steven Blier

For three decades, it has been NYFOS' pleasure and honor to throw musical birthday parties for Ned Rorem. Our first was for his 70th, which brought in the largest audience we ever had at our home at the Greenwich House Music School. Five years later, we commissioned Ned's magnum opus *Evidence of Things Not Seen* in tandem with the Library of Congress, performed it in New York, Washington, Utah, and Nantucket, and made a Grammy-nominated recording of the work. Five years after that, Michael Barrett and I revived *Evidence* at Columbia's Miller Theatre and bravely consented to be interviewed alongside the charismatic, outspoken composer. We missed Ned's 85th, when he was preempted by a Bernstein/Bolcom double-birthday tribute. But we did a 90th birthday tribute with Ned in attendance, and now we celebrate our departed friend on the occasion of his centenary.

Rorem's songs have resounded in my musical world ever since I was a teenager. Around that time, I read an interview with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in which she said that no American could possibly sing German lieder properly. After all, they wouldn't know how to utter the word "wald" unless they had spent some serious time in the Black Forest: "The color of the vowel would never be convincing." These were dispiriting words for a young person interested in song recitals. I assumed that, by extension, no American pianist could play German art song with any authority. According to this *monstre sacré*, I was licked before I started.

But at the Library for the Performing Arts, I came across an LP of Rorem's songs. Here was an American making a passionate stand for the songs of this country. Unlike another teen idol of mine, William Bolcom, Ned didn't write jazzy music—not rhythmically, anyway—and yet he wrote chords that sounded like the great jazz icon Bill Evans. Since I have always been more easily seduced by harmony than by rhythm, Ned's piano textures and Häagen-Dazs chords worked their wiles on me. And "The Lordly Hudson" rocked my world. Here was an art song about the river that I saw from my own window. I wouldn't need to go to the Schwarzwald for sixth months to understand it. Maybe after all there was a repertoire of songs I could call my own. I breathed a sigh of relief.

During those years, Ned answered another of my deepest needs. In the 1960s, it was agonizing for a teenager like me to realize he might be gay. There were few positive role models around, and it seemed that coming out would propel

me into a dank, joyless underworld. Such were the cultural messages I was receiving in an era when most prominent gay musicians were closeted, often unhappily locked into heterosexual marriages. But I remember hearing about Ned Rorem's books, and one afternoon I surreptitiously leafed through a copy of *The Paris Diaries* at Doubleday's on Fifth Avenue and 57th Street. I didn't want to seem too eager, and I carefully kept looking around to see if anyone had spotted me holding a book I suspected might be as racy as *Fanny Hill*. Ned wrote about being gay with a kind of sangfroid I had never imagined possible. In that early work, he was discreet about the mechanical details of his relationships—he was to get more explicit in future volumes. Yet his intense attraction to men is a hunger he does not hide. Titillated and frightened in equal measure, I hurried to put the book back on the shelf. But I came away with something invaluable: The man who wrote a song about my river had also written a book about my secret. Two important seeds had been planted, and they would change my life.

As an artist, Ned has affirmed three other things I hold dear and about which I have often been made to feel guilty: a deep respect for song, an adherence to tonal music, and a preference for French composers over German ones. In an interview with Phillip Ramey for New World Records, Ned stated, "I always think vocally. Even when writing for violin or timpani, it's the vocalist in me trying to get out. Music is, after all, a song expression, and any composer worthy of the name is intrinsically a singer whether he allows it or not."

This philosophy is so close to my own, and in Ned's words it no longer seemed like a limitation but a credo, a source of pride. Ned mused in one of his diaries that song specialists are "the least intellectual of composers"—and he implied that he included himself in that category: "At work on a piece of any length, I'm distracted before it's half written. To see the bridge's other side eliminates the need for arriving there." But not being intellectual about music is not the same as not being intelligent about music. In fact, as the years go by, I have begun to think the two things may be opposites. Yes, some highly intellectual music does pack an emotional punch, like dry ice—so cold it's hot. But I find much of it inedible, cheese-foam instead of real cheese. And I do not think I would have the courage to publish that thought without Ned's example.

Ned's lack of interest in 12-tone music was an extremely un-PC, even dangerous, position to hold in the 1950s and '60s, when serialism (like heterosexuality) ruled the day. Answering Ramey's inquiry on the subject, Ned explained: "It's pretty much meaningless to me. But I wouldn't presume to say that 12-tone writing is necessarily unvocal, in the light of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. Twelve-tone music by its nature can only illustrate emotions gone awry, since there are no harmonic resolutions. Show me a convincing 12-tone song on a merry text." I couldn't help flashing back to my father's reaction to *Wozzeck* when we heard it in Tanglewood in 1969: "That kind of music ... it's ... it's only good for describing ... crazy people!" It seems that my father was also intelligent but not intellectual about music—and I think he hit the nail on the head.

Ned's essential Frenchness—and his nonchalant alienation from German culture—was another minority viewpoint that gave me courage in my early years. When I was studying in the 1960s at Tanglewood and at Yale, the music of France was considered frivolous and unimportant. Some people thought Berlioz was marginally OK, and a couple of people liked the more academic works of Franck, but most of my fellow students were contemptuous of Ravel, Fauré, Poulenc, Bizet—and of anyone who gravitated to their music. I once heard a prominent musician say in an Aspen master class that French piano literature simply wasn't worth discussing because it couldn't be analyzed. Once again, Ned provided a lifeline when I had no defenses, no information, and only my feelings to guide me.

I believe I met Ned in person the night of Paul Jacobs' memorial concert at Symphony Space—in February 1984. Paul had a day job as the pianist for the New York Philharmonic but also had an important career as a solo pianist. He moonlighted as a teacher too, and I had a series of significant lessons with him in the early 1980s before he succumbed to the ravages of AIDS. At the afterparty, I was too shy to talk much with Ned, but we must have made enough contact for me to get invited to tea some time thereafter, a ritual repeated every few years. Given Ned's love of provocation, these could seem more like psychology experiments than social events. He once put me at a table alongside the combative drama critic John Simon, then sat back to watch. Simon's unremitting vitriol nearly melted my contact lenses. I kept my mouth filled with Sachertorte as an antidote, did my best not to sock him in the jaw, and beat the earliest retreat I could manage without offending my host. But at another gathering, when Ned asked me over to hear a

recording of his 1991 cantata *Swords and Plowshares*, he invited me to share a score with the best-looking guy in the room. That time I had no trouble staying till the end of the party.

I find that it is not easy to write about Ned's songs for two reasons. First off, their beauties are hard to analyze (maybe that teacher in Aspen had a point), and when I asked Ned to explain his compositional method, he responded with one of his enigmatic aphorisms that didn't answer the question. And secondly, they have been extolled for so many decades that it has come to seem almost repetitious to praise their beauties. Ned's salient qualities have been touted so often—including the now-ubiquitous citation in 1964 by *Time* magazine as "probably the world's best composer of art songs"—that paying tribute to Ned can assume the feeling of a ritual.

Without apologies, let us admire Rorem's great virtues as a songwriter once again. Though he claimed not to have any technical understanding of singing, he had an excellent instinct for the human voice. I think this emerged from Ned's deep connection to the words he chose to set. Since he was led by a need to make sung poems comprehensible, he was inspired to write gracious vocal lines, satisfying but realistic in length and range. High notes usually come during melismatic passages so that the singer can begin and end a word in a tessitura where they can speak clearly—and also let the voice soar unimpeded. As he wrote, "I set words to music as I talk them: which is what makes my songs personal—if indeed they are." For years, the first thing Ned told me after performances was, "I could understand all the words," often adding, "and only Evelyn Lear bothers to do that any more. Is she still singing?" (Lear retired in 1985, three years before NYFOS' first concert.) He usually followed this with, "Shall I tell you what I liked or what I didn't like?" You may imagine my response.

Ned often said that whatever his merits as a song composer, he had infallible taste in choosing texts. Even Ned's shortest, silliest songs (like "I Am Rose") have unimpeachable literary credentials, and I often find myself absorbed in the lyrics to his songs long before I work my way around to exploring his musical setting. NYFOS was the beneficiary of this great gift when Ned wrote *Evidence of Things Not Seen* for us to celebrate his 75th birthday, in 1998. The project was his idea, a magnum opus on the subject of youth and age, life and death, health and illness, desire and abstinence. The 36-song cycle boasts twin glories: Ned's colorful, passionate music and a brilliant "libretto" culled from 25 writers—American, English, and French. At his 90th birthday tribute, Ned declared that if he were to be remembered for just one work, it should be *Evidence*. Tonight, we feature four songs from that work, "Life in a Love," "A Glimpse," "The Comfort of Friends," and "Come In."

Ned's respect for poetry tends to make his songs musically transparent. Even when there is a lot of activity in the piano writing, or if he tumbles duetting vocal lines in jerky counterpoint as in "Life in a Love," his prosody remains amazingly clear. He only seems to have dropped this guiding principle once: when he wrote for the coloratura soprano Gianna d'Angelo, who had a wonderfully easy high extension that Ned (briefly, and rather surprisingly) indulged. For anyone with high E's and F's to burn, those songs are a gift. Just be ready to see your audience dive for their program booklets to follow the poems as you head for the stratosphere.

Ned's songs are often compared to the *mélodies* of Poulenc, and occasionally they do seem to imitate those of the great French master. It makes sense; Ned famously spent his early adult years in France immersing himself in Parisian culture. No wonder that Ned's "Ferry Me Across the Water," for example, sounds like a gorgeous rewrite of Poulenc's "La grenouillère." But mostly Ned seems like Poulenc's great-nephew rather than his son. Their tonal language is related, but what the two musicians truly share are principles and methods. Both took difficult poets (Eluard, Ashbery) and elucidated them through music. And like Poulenc's, Ned's song oeuvre falls into recognizable genres—machine-like *perpetuo moto* songs, broadly lyrical ones, wise-child singsong, floaters, as well as some astonishingly angry, angular works. Ned was brought up as Quaker, a faith his mother embraced after her brother was killed in World War I. Ned was a passionate pacifist his entire life, and his anti-war material often takes on a vehemence unlike anything else in his song output.

Tonight, we'll sample all of Ned's genres in a program that includes some of his most famous pieces as well as some that are less well known. But we wanted to make this a real party, so we've invited some guests along—a cadre of Ned's friends and teachers who offer a complex, multifaceted window into what's known in architecture as mid-century modern. I felt their array of voices would shed a special light on the birthday boy, and they also opened the door for us

to include Ned's voice as a writer. In true Rorem style, he gets to gossip about his guests without having to lower his voice.

When I showed Ned the list of composers sharing the stage with him tonight, he quietly exclaimed, "Hmm. They're all queer." (This was true, and not exactly an accident; I'd always wanted to do a second edition of *Manning the Canon*, our show celebrating gay men, and I'd privately thought of Ned Is Ninety as M.T.C. Part Deux.) Ned continued to peruse the announcement card. "Well, Marc [Blitzstein] was married, of course, and so was Paul [Bowles]. But then aren't most composers gay? Really, at least 60 per cent." This brought the conversation to a temporary halt. Then Ned looked at me and challenged, "What was Theodore Chanler's sex life like?" I promised him I'd find out.

My 30 years' acquaintance with Ned never exactly brought me closer to him. He was a man who loved contradictions, aphorisms that turn into enigmas, intimate confessions that open one door while blocking another. I once told him that the more I knew about him, the less I felt I understood who he was. "Maybe I don't know either," he murmured. For some reason I persisted. "The same is true of your music—the appeal is enduring, the craftsmanship immaculate, but something always remains elusive. I'm always looking for the meaning of your songs ..." With a Chesire cat smile, Ned said, "Oh, I'm not so sure I believe in the concept of 'meaning' anyway."

My deepest understanding of Ned came not from his music or his published writing, but from the inscriptions he wrote me in two of his books. On the title page of *Knowing When to Stop*, he said, "My life is in your hands, Love, Ned (Rorem)." And a few years later, he signed my Rorem song anthology, "With anxiety, Ned." Ned's carefully crafted persona, created when he was an unspeakably handsome golden boy, seldom admitted to anxiety or need so nakedly. But Ned's private words took me closer to him than anything I had ever experienced in all the time of our friendship.

Ned's anxiety was needless. The evergreen beauties of his music will adorn concert halls and recordings as long as there are pianists, singers, and audiences. New generations are constantly discovering his songs and making wonderful use of them. I shall continue to use my own hands to maintain Ned's legacy—and I shall not be alone.

About the Artists

Steven Blier

Steven Blier is the artistic director of the New York Festival of Song (NYFOS), which he co-founded in 1988 with Michael Barrett. Since the festival's inception, he has programmed, performed, translated, and annotated more than 160 vocal recitals. NYFOS's repertoire spans five centuries of art song, with in-depth explorations of music from Spain, Latin America, Scandinavia, and Russia as well as popular music from early vaudeville to Adam Guettel. Blier's career has included partnerships with Michael Spyres, Renée Fleming ('86, voice), Cecilia Bartoli, Samuel Ramey, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Susan Graham, Jessye Norman, and José van Dam in venues ranging from Carnegie Hall to La Scala. He has also been active in encouraging young recitalists at summer programs, including the Wolf Trap Opera Company, Santa Fe Opera, Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, and San Francisco Opera Center. His former students, including Julia Bullock (Artist Diploma '15, opera studies), Stephanie Blythe, Sasha Cooke (MM '06, voice), Paul Appleby (MM '08, voice; Artist Diploma '10, opera studies), Corinne Winters, and Kate Lindsey, have gone on to be valued recital colleagues and sought-after stars on opera and concert stages. A champion of American art song, he has premiered works of John Corigliano (faculty 1991-present), Paul Moravec, Ned Rorem, William Bolcom, Mark Adamo, John Musto, Adam Guettel, Richard Danielpour, Tobias Picker, Lowell Liebermann (BM '82, MM '84, DMA '87, composition), Harold Meltzer, and Lee Hoiby, many of which were commissioned by NYFOS. Blier's extensive discography includes the premiere recording of Leonard Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles* (Koch International), which won a Grammy; *Spanish Love Songs* (Bridge Records) with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Joseph Kaiser, and Michael Barrett; *Quiet Please*, an album of jazz standards with vocalist Darius de Haas; and *Canción amorosa*, a CD of Spanish songs with soprano Corinne Winters on the GRP label. His most recent CDs are on NYFOS Records, which released its first single (an archival live performance with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson) in 2021, followed by its first album (*From Rags to Riches*, with Stephanie Blythe and William Burden) in 2022. His latest release is *Mi país: Songs of Argentina*, with bass-baritone Federico de Michelis. A native New Yorker, Blier received a bachelor's with honors in English literature at Yale University, where he studied piano with Alexander Farkas. He completed his musical studies in New York with Martin Isepp (faculty 1973-77) and Paul Jacobs (BS '51, piano).

Jen Pitt

Born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, Jen Pitt lives in New York, where she makes devised performance work and directs classical and nonclassical pieces—all of which are worked through a heavily movement-based process. She earned her MFA in theater directing from Columbia University in 2020, trained as a performer at Lecoq in France, and was a loving member of the Living Theatre from 2012 to 2015 under the leadership of Judith Malina. She works in Juilliard's vocal arts department, where she teaches and directs in the ADOS program. She will be directing works at Opera Saratoga and Chautauqua Conservatory this summer.

Francesco Barfoed

- *Celia Ascher Doctoral Fellows Fund*

Francesco Barfoed (MM '22, collaborative piano), a Danish-Italian pianist born and raised in Copenhagen, frequently collaborates with singers and has twice won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions: with mezzo-soprano Megan Moore (2020) and baritone Joseph Parrish (2022). Barfoed and Moore, who won first prize in the Copenhagen Lied-Duo Competition and second prize at the Naumberg Foundation International Vocal Competition, have performed throughout the U.S., including Birmingham, Alabama; Des Moines; the Kennedy Center; and Merkin Concert Hall. Barfoed has performed song recitals at the Usedomer Musikfestival in Germany and Berkshire Opera Festival in Massachusetts, partnered with Carnegie Hall Citywide in NYC, and was broadcast on WQXR. Barfoed works extensively in opera and has assisted with Juilliard productions of *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *The Rake's Progress* (which he co-arranged and performed for two pianos), and *Gianni Schicchi/Suor Angelica*. He has twice participated in Renée Fleming's SongStudio at Carnegie Hall (2021 and 2022) as well as in SongFest as a fellow and has performed in master classes with pianists including Martin Katz, Roger Vignoles, Malcolm Martineau, and Leif Ove Andsnes. Barfoed, who is pursuing his DMA at Juilliard, also holds degrees from the Royal Danish Academy of Music and Rutgers University, where he won the concerto competition. The focus of his doctoral studies is Danish songs, and he specializes in coaching singers in the Danish language. In addition to collaborating with the Museum of Danish America in Iowa, his studies in the U.S. have been supported by several prizes and scholarships from organizations like Denmark-America Foundation, Bikuben Foundation, and perhaps most notably the Victor Borge Scholarship. Barfoed, who holds Italian citizenship, is fluent in Danish, Italian, and English.

Sophia Baete

- *Greene Fellow*

Mezzo-soprano Sophia Baete, from Louisville, Kentucky, is a fourth-year undergraduate at Juilliard studying with Darrell Babidge. Baete has attended intensive programs including Houston Grand Opera's YAVA Program, the Chautauqua Institution, and Boston University Tanglewood Institute. She earned first place at the Schmidt Undergraduate Vocal Competition in both the lower and upper divisions. At Juilliard, Baete recently played Signora Guidotti in *I due timidi* and La Suora Zelatrice in *Suor Angelica*. She is a member of the Denyce Graves Foundation Shared Voices Program and will be a 2024 Gerdine Young Artist at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.

Kerrigan Bigelow

- *S. Jay Hazan Scholarship in Vocal Arts, Helen Marshall Woodward Scholarship In Voice*

Soprano Kerrigan Bigelow, from North Andover, Massachusetts, is an undergraduate at Juilliard under the tutelage of Elizabeth Bishop. While at Juilliard, Kerrigan has sung both traditional and contemporary opera and art song. This past year, she performed as Una Novizia in *Suor Angelica*, sang in a Liederabend, and has appeared twice with NYFOS. Bigelow won second prize in the Musicians Club of New York Competition and performed Libby Larsen's *Try Me, Good King* at SongFest in Nashville, under the direction of the composer. In summer 2022, Bigelow debuted at Chautauqua as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* and Kahout in *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Michael Butler

- *Family Foundation Scholarship, S. Jay Hazan Scholarship in Vocal Arts*

Lyric tenor Michael Butler, from Bowie, Maryland, is pursuing an Artist Diploma at Juilliard, where he studies with Kevin Short. His recent operatic performances include the title role in *Faust* with Opera Baltimore and Washington Opera Society, Rodolfo in *La bohème* with Maryland Opera Studio, The Prince (cover) in *Love for Three Oranges* with Des Moines Metro Opera, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* with Washington Opera Society, and Miles Teller in *Proving Up* with

Maryland Opera Studio. Butler recently appeared in concert with New York City Opera, Opera Baltimore, and Washington Opera Society. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Maryland.

Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha

- *Toulmin Scholarship*

Mexican-American baritone Trevor Haumschilt-Rocha, from San Diego, is a second-year master's student at Juilliard under the tutelage of Kevin Short. This season at Juilliard, Haumschilt-Rocha performed the role of Joe Harland in *Later the Same Evening* and will be performing the role of Alcesta in *Erismena*. Last season at Juilliard, he performed the role of Johannes Zegner in *Proving Up*. He made his professional debut with Opera Saratoga, singing Dottore Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, and will join the Aspen Music Festival in 2024 as a Renée Fleming Fellow. This year, Haumschilt-Rocha received an emerging artist award in the Opera Index Vocal Competition and an encouragement award in the Gerda Lissner Art Song and Lied Competition. He was also a scholarship recipient of the Musical Merit Foundation of Greater San Diego Competition.

Jack Hicks

- *NY Community Trust Schoen-Rene Scholarship*

Jack Hicks (Pre-College '21, voice) is a third-year undergraduate tenor from Bernardsville, New Jersey, studying with William Burden at Juilliard, where he also serves as an ear training teaching fellow. Hicks spent last summer at the Chautauqua Institution, where he sang La Rainette in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* and Pinellino in *Gianni Schicchi*. Juilliard performances include Poulenc's *Tel jour telle nuit* for Pierre Vallet's Liederabend, Cory in *It's Only a Game* (Christian-Frédéric Bloquet) in Opera Lab, and Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder* for Juilliard Songbook. Hicks previously studied voice with Lorraine Nubar at Juilliard Pre-College, piano with Alice Firgau, and conducting with Oliver Hagen. Hicks was a winner of the Schmidt Undergraduate Competition and the Schmidt Vocal (California) and was a recipient of the Shirley Rabb Winston Scholarship and the George London Scholarship.

Jazmine Saunders

- *Kovner Fellow*

Soprano Jazmine Saunders, from Rochester, New York, is a second-year master's student at Juilliard studying with Elizabeth Bishop. This season, she performed as Elaine in *Later the Same Evening* and covers Vitellia in *La clemenza di Tito*. Last season, she performed as La Suora Infermiera in *Suor Angelica* and a soloist in *King Arthur* with Juilliard415. Saunders earned her bachelor's at the Eastman School of Music. Last summer, she joined the Wolf Trap Opera Studio, covering Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*. Her additional training program credits include Seagle Festival and Houston Grand Opera's Young Artists' Vocal Academy. Saunders is a New York district winner of the 2023-24 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and an encouragement award recipient of the Eastern Region.

New York Festival of Song

New York Festival of Song (NYFOS) is dedicated to creating intimate song concerts of great beauty and originality. Weaving music, poetry, history and humor into evenings of compelling theater, NYFOS fosters community among artists and audiences. Each program entertains and educates in equal measure. Founded by pianists Michael Barrett and Steven Blier in 1988, NYFOS continues to produce its series of thematic song programs, drawing together rarely heard songs of all kinds, overriding traditional distinctions between musical genres, exploring the character and language of other cultures, and the personal voices of song composers and lyricists. Since its founding, NYFOS has particularly celebrated American song. Among many highlights is the double bill of one-act comic operas, *Bastianello* and *Lucrezia*, by John Musto and William Bolcom, both with librettos by Mark Campbell, commissioned and premiered by NYFOS in 2008 and recorded on Bridge Records. The 2008 Bridge Records release of *Spanish Love Songs* with Joseph Kaiser and the late Lorraine Hunt Lieberson followed, and NYFOS has produced five recordings on the Koch label, including a Grammy-winning disc of Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles*, and the Grammy-nominated recording of Ned Rorem's *Evidence of Things Not Seen* (also a NYFOS commission) on New World Records. In 2021, NYFOS launched NYFOS Records, which has since released four albums including the live concert recording *From Rags to Riches* with Stephanie Blythe and William Burden; the first stereo recording of Paul Bowles' *Picnic Cantata*; and the debut solo albums of tenor Joshua Blue and baritone Federico De Michelis, each with Steven Blier at the piano. In 2010, NYFOS debuted *NYFOS Next*, a miniseries for new songs hosted by guest composers in intimate venues, including SubCulture, OPERA America's National Opera Center, National Sawdust, and the DiMenna Center for

Classical Music. Passionate about nurturing the artistry and careers of young singers, NYFOS has developed training residencies around the country including with Juilliard's Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts (now in its 17th year); Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts (14th year); San Francisco Opera Center (more than 21 years); Glimmerglass Opera (2008–10); and its newest residency, NYFOS@North Fork in Orient, New York. NYFOS' concert series, touring programs, radio broadcasts, recordings, and educational activities continue to spark new interest in the creative possibilities of the song program and have inspired the creation of thematic vocal series around the world.

Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts

One of America's most prestigious programs for educating singers, The Juilliard School's Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts offers young artists programs tailored to their talents and needs. From bachelor and master of music degrees to an advanced Artist Diploma in Opera Studies, Juilliard provides frequent performance opportunities featuring singers in its own recital halls, on Lincoln Center's stages, and around New York City. Juilliard Opera has presented numerous premieres of new operas as well as works from the standard repertoire.

Juilliard graduates may be heard in opera houses and concert halls throughout the world; diverse alumni artists include well-known performers such as Leontyne Price, Renée Fleming, Risë Stevens, Tatiana Troyanos, Simon Estes, and Shirley Verrett. Recent alumni include Isabel Leonard, Susanna Phillips, Paul Appleby, Erin Morley, Sasha Cooke, and Julia Bullock.

Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts

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Glenn Morton
Nils Neubert
Adam Nielsen, Associate Artistic Director, Master of Music and Graduate Diploma
Donald Palumbo
Diane Richardson, Principal Coach and Music Advisor for Artist Diploma in Opera Studies
Nicolò Sbuelz
Lauren Schiff
Anne Shikany
Jeanne Slater
Avi Stein
Pierre Vallet
Stephen Wadsworth, James S. Marcus Faculty Fellow, Director of Artist Diploma in Opera Studies
Howard Watkins
Gary Thor Wedow
Reed Woodhouse
Brian Zeger, Artistic Director

2022-2023 Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts Fellows

Liza Armistead, piano
Artyom Pak, piano
Jen Pitt, opera directing