

# *American Spiritual Ensemble*

Everett McCorvey, Founder & Music Director



*February \_\_\_\_\_, 2010*

[www.americanspiritualensemble.com](http://www.americanspiritualensemble.com)

*Keeping the American Negro Spiritual Alive!*

**THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE  
EVERETT MCCORVEY, FOUNDER AND MUSIC  
DIRECTOR**

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***PROGRAM***

***ASE***

- Walk Together, Children arr. William Henry Smith
- Hear the Lambs a-Crying arr. Phillip McIntyre  
I've Been 'Buked Hall Johnson  
Pamela Jones, Soprano Soloist; Ricky Little, Baritone Soloist; Calesta Day, Soprano Soloist
- Plenty Good Room arr. William Henry Smith
- Oh, What A Beautiful City! arr. Johnie Dean  
Audrey DuBois, Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Sopranos
- I Want Jesus to Walk With Me arr. Tedrin Blair Lindsay  
Ricky Little, Baritone
- Watch and Pray / Go Down, Moses arr. Undine Smith Moore/arr. Harry T. Burleigh  
Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Soprano; Frederick Jackson, Bass-Baritone
- Great Day arr. Moses Hogan  
Roderick George, Tenor Soloist
- I Wanna Be Ready arr. James Miller  
Hope Koehler, Soprano Soloist
- Wade in the Water Arr. Moses Hogan  
LaToya Lain, Mezzo-Soprano Soloist
- Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel arr. Moses Hogan
- You Must Have That True Religion arr. Roland Carter  
Audrey DuBois, Soprano Soloist

**\*\*\*INTERMISSION\*\*\***

- Lift Every Voice and Sing arr. Roland Carter
- We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace arr. Moses Hogan
- The Battle of Jericho arr. Moses Hogan
- Sit Down Servant, Sit Down arr. Tedrin Blair Lindsay  
Alfonse Anderson, Larry Hylton, John Wesley Wright, Chauncey Parker, Ricky Little
- Lyric Suite Robert L. Morris  
Humoresque - Hope Koehler, Calesta Day, Audrey DuBois  
Juba - Hope Koehler, Calesta Day, Audrey DuBois, Pamela Jones, Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming
- Here's One arr. William Grant Still  
John Wesley Wright, Tenor
- O Redeemed! arr. Uzee Brown, Jr.  
Laurence Albert, Bass-Baritone
- Give Me Jesus arr. Mark Hayes  
Calesta Day, Soprano
- Make Them Hear You (from *Ragtime*) Stephen Flaherty/arr. Johnie Dean  
Eric Brown, Baritone Soloist and Men's Ensemble
- Old Time Religion/Saints Go Marching In arr. McCutchen/McCorvey  
Gwendolyn Brown, Contralto Soloist and Ensemble
- Over the Rainbow (from *The Wizard of Oz*) Harold Arlen/arr. Tedrin Blair Lindsay  
Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Soprano Soloist and Ensemble
- Circle of Life (from *The Lion King*) Elton John and Tim Rice  
John Wesley Wright, Chauncey Packer, Phumzile Sojola, Sabrina Elayne Carten,  
Jondra Harmon, Latoya Lain, and Ensemble

**The American Spiritual Ensemble** was founded by **Everett McCorvey** in 1995. The mission of the American Spiritual Ensemble is to keep the American Negro Spiritual alive. Its members have sung in theaters and opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and abroad in Italy, Germany, Britain, Scotland, Spain and Japan. The repertoire of the American Spiritual Ensemble ranges from opera to spirituals to Broadway. The members of the American Spiritual Ensemble are soloists in their own right and the vocalists have thrilled audiences around the world with their dynamic renditions of classic spirituals, jazz and Broadway numbers highlighting the Black experience.

**Everett McCorvey** is a native of Montgomery, Alabama. He received his degrees from the University of Alabama, including a Doctorate of Musical Arts. As a tenor soloist, Dr. McCorvey has performed in major centers around the world including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, Radio City Music Hall in New York and in England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, China, Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Republics. During the summers, Dr. McCorvey is on the artist faculty of the American Institute of Musical Study (AIMS) in Graz, Austria and the Intermezzo Opera Program in Palm Beach, Florida. Dr. McCorvey holds an Endowed Chair in Opera Studies and is Director of Opera at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Kentucky. Dr. McCorvey was recently announced as the Executive Producer of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the Alltech 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games to be held in Lexington, Kentucky in September of 2010. The Alltech 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games will be the largest equestrian event to ever be held in the United States.

### **Members of the American Spiritual Ensemble**

#### **Soprano**

Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming  
Calesta A. Day  
Audrey DuBois  
Pamela Jones  
Mari-Yan Pringle

#### **Alto**

Gwendolyn Brown  
Sabrina Elayne Carten  
Leah Dexter  
Hope Koehler  
LaToya Lain  
Stephanie McGuire

#### **Tenor**

Alfonse Anderson  
Barron Coleman  
Larry Hylton  
Chauncey Packer  
Phumzile Sojola  
John Wesley Wright

#### **Bass**

Laurence Albert  
Eric Brown  
Frederick Jackson  
Johnathan Green  
Ricky Little  
Michael Preacely  
Tay Seals  
Nathaniel Thompson

#### **Djembe**

Ricky Little  
Everett McCorvey

#### **Piano**

Tedrin Blair Lindsay

**Everett McCorvey, Founder and Music Director**  
**Ricky Little, Assistant Conductor**  
**Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Assistant Conductor**

James E. Lee, Jr. Tour Manager  
Peggy Stamps, Company Manager  
Andrea Jones-Sojola, Company Assistant  
Kenneth Overton, Company Talent Scouting Assistant  
Amelia Groetsch, Global Creative Connections Executive Assistant

**The American Spiritual Ensemble** is represented in the United States by  
Alkahest Artists & Attractions, Inc.  
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The American Spiritual Ensemble is managed by Global Creative Connections [www.globalcreativeconnections.com](http://www.globalcreativeconnections.com)

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[www.americanspiritualensemble.com](http://www.americanspiritualensemble.com)

## Soloist Biographies

### **Laurence Albert, Bass-Baritone**

Laurence Albert's career has spanned more than thirty years. He has sung a repertoire of 50 operatic roles, and 300 songs in seven languages internationally since his debut with the Detroit Opera in 1977. A native of Memphis, Tennessee, he studied classical singing with Edward Zambara, Wendell Whalum, Willis Patterson, and Ethel Maxwell. He has studied interpretation with John Wustman, Gerard Souzay, Erik Werba, Hans Hotter, Walter Berry, and Brigitte Fassbender. Laurence Albert was the first African-American to represent the Mid-South Region at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions held at Lincoln Center in New York (he shared his national prize with Susan Dunn, Thomas Hampson, and eight other talented singers). He is prizewinner of the Concours de Chant de Paris (Opera and Song), the International Concours Tryptique de Paris (French Melodie), and twice, the Franz Schubert Institute Prize of Austria (German Lieder). Conductors include Sir Michael Tippett, Mung-Whun Chung, Robert Shaw, Leonard Slatkin, John Nelson, Gary Bertini, and Rudolf Werthen. Albert's recordings include the historic Enesco *Oedipe* recording by EMI-Pathe-Marconi, featuring Jose Van Dam and the Monte Carlo Philharmonic, Lawrence Foster conducting. The premiere recording of Aubert Lemeland's *Laure, ou la Lettre au Cachet Rouge* on the Skarbo label with the Staatsorchester Rheinische Philharmonie, Marc Tardue conducting. Handel's *Messiah* on the Musick's Monument label with the Gioia Della Musica Praha conducted by Marc Brown, *The K'dusha Symphony* written and conducted by Abraham Kaplan, featuring Roberta Peters on the Camerata Singers, Inc. label, and Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* with the Orchestra of the Golden Age conducted by Denis McCaldin on the Meridian label. As a pedagogue, Laurence Albert is sought after for his master classes and seminars. In Europe, Albert has given master classes for Les Semaines Musicales de Quimper Festival, BalCanto Chorus of Basel, Switzerland, and l'Ecole d'Ete Claude Debussy. Between 1996 and 2002, Laurence Albert conducted the Parisian choral society *The Voice of Freedom* dedicated to the performance of the American Negro Spiritual. He is currently Adjunct Professor of Voice at Rhodes College in Memphis, TN.

### **Alfonse Anderson, Tenor**

Alfonse Anderson, has performed in operas, recitals and concerts for over 35 years. In the United States and Europe he has performed with such notable organizations as the Houston Grand Opera, Teatro Colon Buenos Aires, Teatro Municipal Sao Paulo, Teatro Sols Montevideo, Arizona Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Minnesota Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Oakland Opera, Virginia Opera, Opera Francais, Opera South, Opera Columbus, Opera North and Opera Las Vegas. Dr. Anderson has performed in concert and oratorio with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center and in the National Cathedral in Washington D.C., Chautauqua Symphony, Illinois Symphony, Grant Park Orchestra in Chicago, Warsaw Symphony and Krakow Symphony in Poland, Las Vegas Philharmonic and the Henderson Symphony. He also performs frequently in recitals and concerts throughout the US. The World premier of the opera *Bandana* by Daron Hagen was released in summer of 2006 on Albany Records with Dr. Anderson singing the role of the Leader. Alfonse can be heard on various recordings with the American Spiritual Ensemble and most recently appears on the 2007 DVD release titled *The Spirituals* by PBS. He has taught voice for over 30 years and in that time his students have won international, national and regional vocal competitions with such notable organizations as the MET Opera, NATSAA, Leontyne Price, Marian Anderson, Mario Lanza, Meistersinger, Belvedere and Palm Spring Vocal Competition to name a few. Many of his students have performed in young Artist Programs such as the internationally recognized Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, Aspen Musical Festival, San Francisco Opera, American Institute of Musical Studies, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Chautauqua Opera, Des Moines Opera, Opera North, Sarasota Opera and Portland Opera. In Las Vegas Dr. Anderson serves as the Regional Governor of NATS and is a very active adjudicator for competitions and a master vocal clinician throughout the US. He can regularly be heard singing in concert, recital and opera with The Tenors-4 and with a variety of local opera Companies and symphonies. Dr. Anderson is currently Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

### **Gwendolyn Brown, Contralto**

Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, Gwendolyn Brown obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Music at Fisk University, Nashville, TN where she performed with the famed Fisk Jubilee Singers. Ms. Brown pursued the Masters degree in Vocal Performance at the former Memphis State University (University of Memphis) where she received critical acclaim for her performances with the Memphis State University Opera Theater as Baba (*The Medium*) and The Mother (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*). Her young artist development included the Des Moines Metro Opera Young Artist Program and the Ryan Center for American Artists of Lyric Opera of Chicago. She currently resides in Chicago, Illinois. She has performed for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Tulsa Opera, Chicago Symphony, Chicago Symphonietta and overseas in Amsterdam and Brussels. Ms. Brown's awards include Regional Winner with the Metropolitan Opera Council in Memphis; Finalist with the Metropolitan Opera Council for the Central Region in Chicago; finalist for the Altamura/Caruso International Voice Competition Study Grants, semi-finalist for the New York Oratorio Society Solo Auditions and awards from Classical Singer Magazine and the National Opera Association. In 2008, she performed her signature role of Maria (*Porgy and Bess*) in Amsterdam and Brussels. She understudied the same role for the Francesca Zambello production at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Gwendolyn Brown "*brings a large helping of sass to the role of Maria*" says the Tulsa World of her premier of the role with Tulsa Opera in 2007. Gwendolyn Brown was a "*fabulously vivacious Maria,*" says LA Times of her recent performance at the Hollywood Bowl. She will perform the role for Washington National Opera in 2010. Ms. Brown's 2009-2010 season include performances with the New York Harlem Productions, Chicago Symphonietta and Washington National Opera. To hear Gwendolyn Brown "*is to experience that primal thrill which comes in the presence of a singer whose fusion of soul with a vast, resonant instrument is total.*" (Saugerties Post Star). "*Her dusky voice inhabited the music so completely, we were spellbound.*" (The Oregonian). As one critic states, her singing is simply "*Stunning.*" (Andrew Patner, Chicago Sun Times).

### **Sabrina Elayne Carten, Mezzo-Soprano**

Sabrina Elayne Carten, a native of New York City, began her career with The Chautauqua Symphony in Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess*. This opera remains a staple in Ms. Carten's repertoire and she has performed it in theaters around the world including Theater Des Westens in Berlin, Germany, The Caesarea Amphitheater in Israel, Houston Grand Opera with Maestro John DeMain, Virginia Opera with Maestro Peter

Mark, New Orleans Opera, and New York City Opera in the March 2002 *Live from Lincoln Center* broadcast. At Mobile Opera, Ms. Carten has performed Queenie in *Showboat*, and Marian Anderson in *I Am Marian Anderson*. She reprised the role of Queenie in the National Tour of Hal Prince's production of *Showboat*, appearing in many major U.S. cities. At both Chautauqua Opera and Mobile Opera, Ms. Carten has appeared as Tituba in *The Crucible*. She has sung Mrs. Noye in Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* with The Rochester Oratorio Society. Also with the Rochester Oratorio Society in Cracow, Poland, Ms. Carten sang the international premiere performance of *An Atheist Mass*. Maestro Julius Williams invited her to sing Queen Ayat and Cecilia Lightfoot in Shauneille Perry's Off Broadway revival of *In Dahomey*. Ms. Carten has been a featured soloist in international performances with the New York Harlem Gospel Singers. In a landmark performance of their new season, the Dance Theatre of Harlem featured Ms. Carten as Della in Johnny Mercer's *Saint Louis Woman*. She is a frequent guest soloist and recitalist at Albany State University in Georgia and has also appeared with the Albany Symphony in the cantata *A Tribute to the Victims of September 11th*.

### **Barron Coleman, Tenor**

American tenor Barron Coleman has performed in the best opera theaters in the world entertaining audiences from Milan to Paris to Sydney and Japan. A native son of the lone star state, he also has many important national debuts to his credit including Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera and Dallas Opera. Mr. Coleman spent 2000-2002 in Barcelona singing at the Liceu lending his voice to the roles of Il Messaggero in *Aida*, Le Premier Philistin in *Samson et Dalila* and Maintop in *Billy Budd*. During the fall of 2003, Mr. Coleman sang in a new production of the Spanish favorite *Luisa Fernanda* by Toroba with Los Amigos de la Zarzuela in New York City. In addition to recording Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with the Nashville Symphony for the Decca label during the 2005-2006 concert season, Mr. Coleman's tenor was also heard at Lincoln Center in the Collegiate Chorale's production of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* and in Peter Sellar's critically acclaimed production of *Zaïde* at the Mostly Mozart Festival. Mr. Coleman's repertoire choices stretch from the title role in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* to the demanding role of Tony in Henze's masterpiece *Elegy for Young Lovers*. Recent performances include appearances at L'Opera Comique, Théâtre de Luxemburg and Lyric Opera of Chicago in addition to tackling the role of Eisenstein from *Die Fledermaus*. An alumnus of The Juilliard School, The Manhattan School of Music and Southern Methodist University, Mr. Coleman holds degrees in Vocal Pedagogy, Music Education and Psychology. He is currently a candidate for the Doctoral Degree at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

### **Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, Soprano**

Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, a native New Yorker, has performed in Europe, Japan, and the United States. While still an undergraduate student she made her debut with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra in a concert version of Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess*, and has since then gone on to sing the roles of Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare* at the Ernen Musikdorf Festival in Switzerland, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with the Mannes Opera in New York, Clara in *Porgy and Bess* in Germany, the Netherlands, and Japan, The Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, the Flower Woman in Andre Previn's *A Street Car Named Desire*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, La Fortuna in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, and most recently, the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* with the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre. An artist of great sensitivity, Ms. Cunningham-Fleming has appeared in recital and as a concert soloist in venues that include the United Nations and New York's Lincoln Center. She has also recorded Schubert's *Mass in G major* as soloist with the Boy's Choir of Harlem. In addition to the classical repertoire, Ms. Cunningham-Fleming is an outstanding interpreter of traditional music from the rich African-American heritage. She is a regular soloist with the American Spiritual Ensemble and has toured with them throughout Europe and the United States. She is also an alumna of the Girls Choir of Harlem. Her innovative recital programming frequently includes works by African-American composers. Ms. Cunningham-Fleming holds a Master of Music from the Mannes College of Music in New York, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Kentucky under the supervision of Dr. Everett McCorvey. She is also an Assistant Conductor for the American Spiritual. Jeryl serves as the Assistant Conductor for the American Spiritual Ensemble.

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### **Calesta A. Day, Soprano**

Calesta A. Day made her operatic debut as Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with Miami University Opera. She has also appeared as a Slave Chorister in the premier of *Margaret Garner* with Cincinnati Opera, Countess Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Miami University and Bowling Green State University Opera. She performed and premiered the role of Alice in *The Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* with Sinclair Community College Theatre. She was Third Spirit in *Cendrillon* with Bowling Green State University Opera, guest soloist in *Eubie* with Theater Under the Stars, and The Angel in *The Greatest Gift* with Doug Toles Productions. A Dayton area performer for years, she has appeared with such groups as Bobby Jones Gospel, James Cleveland and the Gospel Music Workshop of

America, and with the late Ronald Winans. Ms. Day serves as Music director of the children's choir at Wesley United Methodist Church. She was the vocal director for the Dayton Playhouse's production of *Five Guys Named Moe* and Theater Under the Stars' production of *Eubie*. Ms. Day received her Bachelors degree from Bowling Green State University in Vocal Performance, a Masters degree in Education with a Music Concentration from University of Dayton, and the Masters degree in Vocal performance from Miami University. She is currently studying with Dr. Everett McCorvey as a third-year doctoral student in vocal performance at the University of Kentucky.

### **Roderick George, Tenor**

A native of Mobile, Alabama, is currently an Associate Professor of Music at the University of Montevallo in Montevallo, Alabama. He received the Doctor of Music degree in voice performance from Florida State University, and advanced training in opera at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Additionally, he was a Resident Artist with Amarillo Opera and an Apprentice Artist with Des Moines Metro Opera. An active member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, he participated in the NATS Internship Program held at Colorado State University in 2004, where he studied vocal pedagogy under the tutelage of Clifton Ware. Prior to joining the UM faculty in 2004, he was an Assistant Professor of Music at Stillman College. Dr. George enjoys an active performance career, which includes his recent role and company debut with Opera Theater of Pittsburgh as Sportin' Life in the company's new production of *Porgy and Bess* and his role debut as G erald in *Lakm e* in St. Louis with Union Avenue Opera, both during the 2008-09 season. Among his other operatic roles are Rodolfo (*La Boh me*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Tamino in (*Die Zauberfl te*), Alfredo (*La Traviata*), Ferrando (*Cos  fan tutte*), Albert (*Albert Herring*), Camille de Rosillon (*The Merry Widow*), Ralph Rackstraw (*HMS Pinafore*), Benedict (*Beatrice and Benedict*), Aaron (*Different Fields*), and David (*I was looking at the Ceiling and then I saw the sky*). As a concert artist, Roderick performs regularly as a soloist in major concert and oratorio works, including Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Mass in C Minor*, Bach's *Magnificat*, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. He was most recently heard in Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Gounod's *Messe Solennelle* with the Tulsa Oratorio Chorus and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra and the Southeastern Chamber Orchestra. In February 2008, he was a featured guest soloist with the Clayton Symphony Orchestra of Missouri in a concert of opera arias and duets. Specializing in art song settings of poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar and Langston Hughes, he has presented recent solo recitals at Jacksonville State University, Tennessee State University, Fayetteville State University, and Samford University, Birmingham. He has also recorded and toured as a soloist with the American Spiritual Ensemble throughout the United States and Spain. He made his European solo debut in a series of orchestral concerts in Austria, including a benefit concert for Doctors without Borders and a gala concert celebrating the operettas of Austrian composer Robert Stolz. In competition, he was a Mid-South Regional Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, Southeastern Regional Finalist in the NATS Artist Awards, and a finalist in the Mobile Opera Competition, Florida Suncoast Opera Guild Competition, National Society of Arts and Letters Voice Competition, and the Orpheus National Voice Competition.

### **Jondra Harmon, Mezzo-Soprano**

Jondra Harmon holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in voice and bassoon from Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina and a Master of Music degree in voice performance from the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Her past teachers include Patricia Harrelson and Marianna Busching. While at Peabody, Ms. Harmon performed the role of the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* as part of the Peabody Outreach Opera, a program dedicated to exposing school age children throughout Maryland to music and opera. She also performed Cornelia in scenes from Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, with the baroque orchestra, under the direction of Webb Wiggins. Ms. Harmon received acclaim for her role in the premiere production of *Ophelia Forever*, a chamber opera for three women written by rising composer Amy Beth Kirsten. Additional opera credits for Ms. Harmon include Madame Flora in *The Medium*, the title role in excerpts from *Carmen*, and Mother in the children's opera *Little Red Riding Hood*. In 2003, Ms. Harmon made her European debut as Zia Principessa in *Suor Angelica* with Operafestival di Roma, in Rome, Italy. While in Rome she also portrayed Suzuki in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Clara in *Porgy and Bess*, and appeared in *L'elisir d'amore*. Ms. Harmon toured with the Young Artist Residency Program at Kentucky Opera in Louisville, Kentucky. While a resident, she appeared as Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Gertrude in a touring production of *Romeo and Juliet*, and in Mark Adamo's *Little Women*. Ms. Harmon was also featured in the Great American Voices Tour, bringing highlights from popular operas and American musicals to military bases and public schools throughout the United States. Her oratorio work includes solo roles in the Durufle's *Requiem* with the Louisville Choral Arts Society, Handel's *Messiah* with the Handel Choir of Baltimore, and Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* with the Shepherd University Masterworks Concert Series. Ms. Harmon currently teaches voice and bassoon in the Fredericksburg, Virginia area sings regularly with the Washington National Opera Chorus under the direction of Maestro Placido Domingo.

### **Frederick Jackson, Bass-Baritone**

Frederick Jackson is a native of Atlanta, Georgia. He made his New York City Opera debut this last spring in the role of Dessalines in *Troubled Island*. He also portrayed the role Nelson Mandela (*No Easy Walk to Freedom*) in excerpts performed on the 10th anniversary of their Vox showcase. Mr. Jackson spent the 2007-2008 season in the Zurich Opera's International Opera Studio, after which he made his debut at the Hamburgische Staatsoper as Giove in a production of *La Calisto*. He has been engaged as a young artist with the Virginia Opera, and completed his studies at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Other roles to his credit include Dandini in *La Cenerentola*, Guglielmo in *Cos  fan tutte*, Mandarin in *Turandot*, and Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*.

### **Hope Koehler, Soprano**

Hope Koehler has appeared with many opera companies and orchestras, such as Nashville Opera, Tennessee Opera Theatre, Blair Opera Theatre, MTSU Opera Theatre, University Opera Theatre in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Northland Opera Theatre Experience, Lyric Opera of the North, Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra, Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra, Lake Superior Chamber Orchestra, Lexington Symphony Orchestra, and Itasca Symphony Orchestra. With these companies she has appeared in such productions as *Carmen*, *Il Trovatore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Rigoletto*, *The Impresario*, *The Old Maid and the Thief*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *La Boh me*, *Der Freisch tz*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Gianni Schicchi* and in the title roles of *Tosca*, *Carmen*, *Fidelio*, and *Madama Butterfly* among others. Koehler's

operetta and musical theatre performances include *The Mikado*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Pajama Game*, *Oklahoma*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *West Side Story*. Koehler has performed as a soloist in oratorio and other choral orchestral works, such as Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Vesperae solennes di confessore*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Mahler's Symphony No. 2 (*Resurrection*) and many others. Koehler has also been on the faculty of the prestigious Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts for seven years and in 2006 served as chair of the vocal music department. In addition, in July and August of 2006 she was a member of the voice faculty at the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria. In June of 2008 Albany Records released Koehler's recording of John Jacob Niles songs titled *The Lass from the Low COUNTRY*, performed with James Douglass at the piano and produced by the American Spiritual Ensemble organization. Koehler received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Vocal Performance and Music Education at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, and her Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance at the University of Alabama. Her Doctor of Musical Arts degree was completed at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY where she studied with tenor Everett McCorvey and soprano Gail Robinson. She is currently on the voice faculty at West Virginia University.

### **LaToya Lain, Mezzo Soprano**

LaToya Lain is a former Assistant Professor of Vocal Music at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama and Adjunct Professor at New York University. She is a native of New Orleans, where she attended the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and was a member of the Moses Hogan Chorale. She has studied voice at Michigan State University and Florida State University. During her tenure at Michigan State, Ms. Lain performed the roles of Sally in *A Hand of Bridge* and Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*. She has received both first and second places in the National Association of Teachers for Singing Vocal Competitions and received a full scholarship to attend the International School of the Performing Arts in Pennsylvania. During her tenure at Florida State University, Ms. Lain performed the roles of Little Buttercup in *HMS Pinafore*, Public Opinion in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Madame Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music*, and Dame Quickly in *Falstaff*. Ms. Lain is currently completing her Doctorate of Musical Arts at the College Conservatory of Music. Since becoming a student at CCM, Ms. Lain has appeared as Bianca in *The Rape of Lucretia*, Jezibaba in *Rusalka*, Baba in *The Medium*, Tituba in *The Crucible* and Polinesso in *Ariodante*. She has appeared as a soloist several times with CCM Symphony Band and has been an Alto soloist with the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and the CCM Philharmonic Orchestra. She was the Encouragement Award Winner of the Gerda Lissner Foundation Scholarship Competition in New York City and has also received 3rd place in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Regional Competition in the Gulf Coast Region and an Encouragement Award in the MET Competition the following year. Ms. Lain once again attended the Opera Theatre and Music Festival of Lucca, Italy where she has performed as La Principessa in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and Madame D'Urfe in the Italian premier of Argento's *Casanova*. The November/December 2003 issue of Opera Now magazine described her performance as "outstanding!" The local newspaper chose the word "ottimo" when describing Ms. Lain's character. She has also completed intense study at the International School of the Performing Arts in Pennsylvania and the Rising Star Singer's Audition Works in Rising Sun, Indiana. Ms. Lain was in the Young Artist Program at Chautauqua Opera, where she performed in *Madame Butterfly*, *The Crucible*, *The Music Man*, and *Lucia of Lammermoor*. She has since relocated to New York City where she has performed as Zita in *Gianni Schicchi* with Chelsea Opera, is a soloist with Opera Noire of New York and has several upcoming engagements with Opera Oggi New York.

### **Tedrin Blair Lindsay, Pianist**

Tedrin Blair Lindsay was raised in Rome, Italy and has been a professional accompanist since the age of ten. He performs well over one hundred recitals annually, boasting a huge repertoire of vocal and instrumental chamber works, with specialties in 20<sup>th</sup> century French and American music. Dr. Lindsay is presently on the opera faculty at the University of Kentucky, where he works as vocal coach and musical director. His UK productions have included Joseph Baber's *River of Time*, Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land*, Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music*, Gian Carlo Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Andre Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*, and nine incarnations of UK's annual Broadway revue *It's a Grand Night for Singing*. He also teaches the popular course "Introduction to Opera" for the Lexington Opera Society, and for several years has hosted the Opera Quiz intermission feature for the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions at both the district and regional levels. While in Kentucky, Mr. Lindsay has collaborated several times with Actors' Guild of Lexington – as award-winning musical director for Sondheim's *Assassins* and William Finn's *Falsettos*, and as composer of an elaborate score for *Angels in America: Perestroika* by Tony Kushner. Dr. Lindsay has also worked with such New York companies as Bel Canto Opera, Golden Fleece Opera, Westchester Opera, Rockwell Productions, and the off-Broadway Lamb's Theatre Company. In the early 1990s, he traveled as musical director of the first two national tours of Randy Courts and Mark St. Germain's *The Gifts of the Magi*, and another national tour of Roger Miller's *Big River*, and more recently he has performed in Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, and in the entourage of Muhammad Ali's European tour to promote his charitable foundation. Dr. Lindsay earned a Ph.D. in Musicology at UK in 2009, with a dissertation on the topic of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century American opera. He also occasionally appears as an actor, with credits including the 1978 Bernardo Bertolucci film *Luna* starring Jill Clayburgh and Matthew Barry.

### **Ricky Little, Baritone**

Ricky Little is a native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He attended Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama where he earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in Music. As a University Fellow at The Ohio State University, Dr. Little earned the Master of Arts Degree in Vocal Pedagogy and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance. During this time he also completed studies in opera performance at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Dr. Little has been engaged in hundreds of creative productions in North America, Europe, Asia and South America. He has given more than one hundred international performances on four continents, which include eighteen countries and over twenty-five major cities. To date he has participated in twenty major professional tours, encompassing over twenty international music festivals. He has performed in some of the most prestigious music halls in the world, and before royalty and

heads of state, including former U.S. President Bill Clinton. His work has been reviewed in national and international newspapers, and has been aired over the ABC, TBN, KET and BET television networks. Performances given by Dr Little on the international stage have been broadcast over radio and television in Italy, Spain, East Germany, Great Britain, Brazil and other countries in South America. He can be seen in the films "Impresario", and "The Spirituals", and can be heard on four CD recordings. The Alabama Music Hall of Fame has also recognized Dr. Little for his work as conductor with the Aeolians of Oakwood College. In 2003, the Aeolians were given a bronze star in the Hall of Fame. Currently Dr. Little holds the position of Associate Professor of Voice at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky, and is assistant conductor of The American Spiritual Ensemble.

### **Chauncey Packer, Tenor**

American tenor Chauncey Packer is an exciting talent on the stages of opera houses in Europe and the United States. He has recently performed the roles of Amon *AKHNATEN* with Atlanta Opera, Edmondo *MANON LESCAUT* with Shreveport Opera and Remendado *CARMEN* with New Orleans Opera. In past seasons he performed the roles of Alfredo *LA TRAVIATA* with Pensacola Opera, Rodolfo *LA BOHEME* with Mobile Opera, and Arturo *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR* with New Orleans Opera. Mr. Packer is also one of the most in-demand artists for his captivating portrayal of Sportin' Life *PORGY AND BESS*. Following his debut of this role with Atlanta Opera, a reviewer proclaimed, "Here Chauncey Packer was the complete entertainer." (The Atlanta Journal). This year he made his San Francisco Opera debut in the role to rave reviews. He has performed the role with Mobile Opera, Opera Grand Rapid, Tulsa Opera and this season in many major European cities with the Munich-based New York Harlem Productions tour, with whom he has also performed in Japan. Mr. Packer performed with an additional tour of *PORGY AND BESS* with the Opéra Comique where he sang Mingo and cover Sportin' Life in Paris, Caen, and Luxembourg. A recent concert performance of the same work with the Nashville Symphony, conducted by John Mauceri, was recorded and released on the Decca label. He has also performed concerts with Edmonton Opera, Opera Pacific, Baton Rouge Symphony, Mobile Symphony, Gulf Coast Opera, Shreveport Opera, and Pensacola Symphony, in such works as Haydn *Mass in C Major*, Beethoven *Ninth Symphony*, Bruckner *Te Deum*, Schubert *Mass in G Major* and Handel *Messiah*. Mr. Packer future engagements include Steuerman *DIE FLIEGENDER HOLLÄNDER* with New Orleans Opera and will reprise his performance of Sportin' Life *PORGY AND BESS* with Atlanta Opera in 2011.

### **Phumzile Sojola, Tenor**

Phumzile Sojola is a graduate of the University of Kentucky, where he has performed the roles of Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Don José in *Carmen* and Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. He has appeared in productions with Glimmerglass Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Dayton Opera, Kentucky Opera, and Houston Ebony Opera. Mr. Sojola debuted the role of Arthur in the Nathan Davis jazz opera *Just Above My Head* with Opera Theater of Pittsburgh. In 2008, he made his concert debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra, performed Crabman and Robbins in Opera National de Lyon's new production of *Porgy and Bess*, and was on a concert tour of Spain with the American Spiritual Ensemble. In 2009, he sang with the "Three Mo' Tenors" in Edmonton, Canada and sang Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with Connecticut Opera. He can be heard on the latest American Spiritual Ensemble recording, "The Spirituals."

### **Peggy Stamps, Stage Director/Company Manager**

Peggy Stamps is a native of Detroit, Michigan. Peggy began studying dance and drama at an early age and has had the opportunity to study under many world renowned choreographers and acting coaches including Sara Yarborough and Keith Lee (former soloists with The Alvin Ailey Dance Company), Robin Wilson (founding member of Urban Bush Women), Barbara Sullivan (Atlanta Dance Theatre), and Mike Lemmon (casting director, *The Sixth Sense*). Peggy has used her training while landing roles in *Ain't Misbehavin*, *A Chorus Line*, and as Linda Loman in *Death of a Salesman*. Peggy is also an accomplished product spokesperson and has appeared on cable networks in the US and Canada on over 200 occasions. Under the encouragement of her mentors, Peggy began focusing on choreography and stage direction. Over the past 15 years, Peggy has choreographed and/or directed over 100 stage productions and concert works. Peggy, however, has always maintained her love for the performance of modern dance to the spiritual (the performance style danced by her first mentor). This propelled her to join the American Spiritual Ensemble in its' second year. Peggy has since this time served as a solo dancer, stage director, and Company Manager for the group. Peggy is a freelance choreographer / director and is also an instructor of stage movement for the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre. Peggy is a graduate of Purdue University.

### **John Wesley Wright, Tenor**

John Wesley Wright is known for his artistic and soulful interpretations of music from baroque to Broadway. In addition to singing a nationally televised Christmas Eve concert at the Royal Palace for the Belgian Royal Family, he has performed in opera houses, concert halls, and festivals throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan. With a host of opera and oratorio roles, art songs, spirituals, and cabaret music in his repertoire, Mr. Wright's current season includes performances of Bach's *St. John Passion* with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, and tours with the internationally acclaimed American Spiritual Ensemble. Highlighted in the PBS documentary film, *The Spirituals: Featuring The American Spiritual Ensemble*, released nationally in February 2007, Mr. Wright is gold medalist and top prizewinner of the Savannah Music Festival American Traditions Vocal Competition 2000. He has also claimed top prizes from the National Federation of Music Clubs, Metropolitan Opera National Council, Bel Canto Regional Artists, Ohio's Vocal Resource Network Art Song Competition, and the International Schubert Competition in Vienna, Austria. Mr. Wright is a native of Rome, Georgia, and holds degrees from Maryville College

and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He is an active vocal consultant, clinician, and leader of workshops titled "Singing in the African American Tradition" in schools, churches, and colleges. Mr. Wright served eight years as Artist-in-Residence at the University of Dayton and now resides in Salisbury, MD where he is Instructor of Voice, Director of Opera Workshop and Coordinator of Vocal Activities at Salisbury University.

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