

Tuesday  
**MAR 19**  
7:30 pm

# Lawrence Brownlee, tenor

One of the world's leading voices in opera



This event is made possible through the generous support of the Clyde & Marty Nichols Performing Arts Fund and the Eugene A. & C. Florence Stephenson Chamber Music Fund.

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Jeff and Mary Weinberg are pleased to support performing arts experiences in our community and help bring world-class artists, like Lawrence Brownlee, to the Lied Center stage.

## PROGRAM

Lawrence Brownlee, tenor  
Kevin Miller, pianist

Joseph Marx (1882–1964)

“Nocturne”

“Selige Nacht”

“Die Elfe”

“Christbaum”

“Hat dich die Liebe berührt”

Jasmine Barnes (b. 1991)

“Peace”

Brandon Spencer (b. 1992)

“I Know My Soul”

Carlos Simon (b. 1986)

“Vocalise III”

Damien Sneed (b. 1979)

“Beauty That is Never Old”

“The Gift to Sing”

Shawn E. Okpebholo (b. 1981)

“Romance”

Joel Thompson (b. 1988)

“My People”

### 20-Minute Intermission

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

“Ad una stella”

Aria from *Rigoletto*: “La donna è mobile”

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)

Me voglio fa' na casa

Aria from *Rita*: “Allegro io son”

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

“La lontanaza”

Aria from *L'occasione fa il ladro*: “D'ogni più sacro impegno”

Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835)

“La ricordanza”

Aria from *Il Pirata*: “Nel furor delle tempeste”

Program is subject to change. Please see your pre- and post-performance emails for text and translations.

**Lawrence Brownlee** is a leading figure in opera, both as a singer on the world's top stages and as a voice for activism and diversity in the industry. Captivating audiences and critics around the globe, he has been hailed as "an international star in the bel canto operatic repertory" (*The New York Times*), "one of the world's leading bel canto stars" (*The Guardian*) and "one of the most in-demand opera singers in the world today" (NPR).

Brownlee began his 2023–24 season with Opera Rara at London's Wigmore Hall in September for a recording of Donizetti's rarely-performed song repertoire, alongside pianist Carlo Rizzi, before joining the 2023 George Enescu International Festival to perform the Fioravanti Selections from *La foresta d'Hermanstad*. Following this, Brownlee joined tenor Levy Sekgapane for a duo recital at the Grand Théâtre Genève. At the end of September 2023, he returned to the Wiener Staatsoper to perform as Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, ahead of his role as Tonio in the Lyric Opera of Chicago production of *La Fille Du Regiment* in November. In December, he joined the Wiener Konzerthaus for their 2023 Christmas in Vienna Gala before reuniting with longtime friend, collaborator and fellow Rossini expert Michael Spyres for KAPOS – World Opera Stars' "Game of Tenors: Brownlee & Spyres Battle of the High Cs." Brownlee kicked off 2024 with recital engagements at the Dallas Opera and the La Jolla Music Society, in addition to bringing his acclaimed *Rising* program to San Francisco performances in February 2024, and a future performance at the Concertgebouw in June 2024. In May 2024, he will make his anticipated return to the Teatro alla Scala as Ernesto in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Brownlee's season will end with the return of his Don Ramiro in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* at the Bayerischen Staatsoper.

The 2022–23 season featured Brownlee in several of his signature Rossini roles, including Rodrigo in *Otello* at Opera Philadelphia, the title role of *Le comte Ory* at Lyric Opera of Chicago and Count Almaviva at the Royal Opera House, in addition to his return to the Metropolitan Opera as Tamino in a new production of *Die Zauberflöte*. He also shared the stage with Michael Spyres in a program titled *Amici e Rivali* at the Theatre des Champs-Élysées in January 2023, in addition to the premiere of his new album *Rising*, which featured Brownlee along with pianist Kevin J. Miller and was released through Warner Classics. The duo performed newly commissioned songs by composers Shawn E. Okpebholo, Damien Sneed, Joel Thompson and others, with texts drawn from James Weldon Johnson and other great Black writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Brownlee and Miller toured *Rising* at venues across the U.S., including Carnegie Hall, the Kimmel Center, Calderwood Studio at GBH Boston and the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts at Emory University. *The Boston Globe* praised how "Brownlee is smartly applying his star power to uplift music that might not otherwise be heard, and spread the names of composers on the verge of greater recognition...all the commissions are worthy of repeat performances."

In spring 2021, Brownlee joined The Juilliard School as a distinguished visiting faculty member. He serves as artistic advisor for Opera Philadelphia, where his responsibilities include increasing and expanding audience diversity, advocating for new works and liaising with the general director from the perspective of a

performing artist. "As an artist, I think it is important that we are actively advocating for this beautiful art form we love so much," said Brownlee, "ensuring that it will be alive and well for many years to come." He also serves as an ambassador for Lyric Opera of Chicago's Lyric Unlimited, and for Opera for Peace. Highlights of Brownlee's most recent past seasons include his debut in the title role of Rameau's *Platée* with Opéra National de Paris to great acclaim. He also participated in Washington National Opera's *Come Home: A Celebration of a Return* concert to open The Kennedy Center's 50th Anniversary Season and marking a return to live performance. In fall 2021, Brownlee released a holiday mixtape with neo-classical pianist BLKBOK called *Angels Watching Over Me*. He made his role debut as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* at New National Theatre Tokyo. In the 2019–20 season, he added Fernand to his repertoire in a new production of Donizetti's *La Favorite* with the Houston Grand Opera.

In recent years, Brownlee has emerged as a pivotal voice around equity and diversity in classical music. He works with companies and engages civic organizations in the cities he visits to create programs and experiences seeking to expand opera audiences. His critically acclaimed solo recital program, *Cycles of My Being*, a song cycle that centers on the Black male experience in America today, has toured extensively, including performances at Opera Philadelphia, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center and virtual broadcasts throughout 2020. Following the successful *Lawrence Brownlee and Friends* concert at Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2019, he performed *Giving Voice* at Houston Grand Opera, a concert created to celebrate Houston's diverse community, and he reprised his concert at Lyric with the virtual performance of *Lawrence Brownlee and Friends: The Next Chapter* in July 2020.

In May 2020, Brownlee launched *The Sitdown with LB*, a weekly Facebook Live series exploring the experience of being an African American opera singer. The series featured him in conversation with renowned artists like George Shirley, Denyce Graves, Martina Arroyo, J'Nai Bridges, Angel Blue and others. In 2021, Brownlee expanded the series to include a segment titled *Inside the Industry*, where he shifted the focus to a behind-the-scenes look at the opera industry, speaking with leaders such as Diane Zola (Metropolitan Opera), Francesca Zambello (Glimmerglass and Washington National Opera), Anthony Tommasini (*The New York Times*) and Matthew Horner (IMG Artists). Since April 2020, he has also hosted the video series *Coffee and a Song*, in which he invites artist friends to perform interpretations of art songs from the intimacy of their own homes. Brownlee also gave a masterclass conversation/performance as part of National Sawdust's Digital Discovery Festival.

With an ever-increasing presence in opera, recital and concerts, Lawrence Brownlee has cemented his place as one of the top artists in classical music. He is a regular guest at the world's most important opera houses, including The Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera House - Covent Garden, Bayerische Staatsoper, Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opéra national de Paris,

Gran Teatre del Liceu, Teatro Real, Opernhaus Zürich and Wiener Staatsoper. He is a fixture at the world's top recital venues, including Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall and The Kennedy Center. His concert performances include collaborations with The Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the festivals of Baden-Baden and Salzburg.

Brownlee is the fourth of six children and first discovered music when he learned to play bass, drums and piano at his family's church in Hubbard, OH. He was awarded a Master of Music degree from Indiana University and went on to win a Grand Prize in the 2001 Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions. Brownlee is a winner of numerous awards and distinctions, including Male Singer of the Year (2017 International Opera Awards), The Kennedy Center's Marian Anderson Award, and the *Opera News* Award (2021). In October 2019, he had the distinct honor of singing at Jessye Norman's funeral in her hometown of Augusta, GA.

