



Washington National Opera
The Kennedy Center

Timothy O'Leary
General Director

Francesca Zambello
Artistic Director

Press Release
September 18, 2018

**Washington National Opera presents
Marian Anderson Vocal Award 2018 Recipient**

Ryan Speedo Green

**Gifted bass-baritone gives an intimate recital
in the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater**

October 4, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

(WASHINGTON)—Named for the groundbreaking African American contralto, the **Marian Anderson Vocal Award** recognizes a young American singer in opera, oratorio, or recital repertoire with outstanding promise for a significant career. Washington National Opera (WNO) named bass-baritone Ryan Speedo Green as the 2018 recipient earlier this year and is pleased to present him in concert on Thursday, October 4 at 7:30 p.m. in the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater. Tickets are \$39.

A Virginia native, Green's path took him from juvenile detention to the Metropolitan Opera and other great stages of the world, including Salzburg, Vienna, Houston, and now, Washington, D.C. His recital at the Kennedy Center includes works by Wagner, Verdi, and Mahler as well as the American composers Margaret Bonds, Florence B. Price, Leslie Adams, and Howard Swanson. Green will be accompanied by pianist Adam Nielsen.

In addition to the recital co-presented by WNO and the Kennedy Center's Fortas Chamber Music Concerts, Green received a \$10,000 cash prize and will lead a master class with students in the Vocal Music program at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Washington D.C.'s visual and performing arts high school. Green was selected by a distinguished panel comprising Evans Mirageas (Artistic Director Cincinnati Opera and Atlanta Symphony Orchestra), Michael Heaston (now Music Director-HGO Studio at Houston Grand Opera and Director of Opera Studies at Rice University), Francesca Zambello (WNO Artistic Director), Andrew Jorgensen

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(now General Director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis), director Tazewell Thompson (*Lost In The Stars* and *Appomattox* at WNO), mezzo-soprano and former Marian Anderson Prize winner Denyce Graves, and soprano and Kennedy Center Honoree Martina Arroyo.

In order to honor Ms. Anderson's personal and humanitarian achievements, the Award encourages service and education, enabling exemplary artists to connect with the community. Aligning with Green's skills and interest, his educational program at the Duke Ellington School aims to positively impact vocal music students. The school offers a pre-college preparatory and comprehensive arts curriculum, which includes a major in vocal music. With more than 50 of the school's vocal students invited to attend the master class, select students will be given the opportunity to perform and receive the artist's feedback and advice.

Prior Award recipients include Sylvia McNair, Denyce Graves, Philip Zawisza, Nancy Maultsby, Patricia Racette, Michelle DeYoung, Nathan Gunn, Marguerite Krull, Eric Owens, Lawrence Brownlee, Indira Mahajan, Sasha Cooke, J'nai Bridges, Jamie Barton, Janai Brugger, and most recently, counter-tenor John Holliday.

Ticket Information

Tickets are \$39 and are available [online](#), in person at the Kennedy Center Box Office, and by calling (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324. Groups of 10 or more may contact the Kennedy Center Group Sales office at (202) 416-8400. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

ABOUT RYAN SPEEDO GREEN

Bass-Baritone Ryan Speedo Green is quickly establishing himself as an artist of international demand at the world's leading opera houses. The 2018 – 2019 season sees Mr. Green return to the Metropolitan Opera to sing The King in *Aida*, conducted by Nicola Luisotti, which will be broadcast to theaters around the world as part of the Met's *Live in HD* program. Mr. Green also returns to the Wiener Staatsoper as a member of the ensemble with roles including Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Der Einarmige in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and Lodovico in *Otello*, among others.

Orchestral engagements for the 2018 – 2019 season include Beethoven's Symphony No 9 conducted by Marin Alsop at the Ravinia Festival, a debut with the Mostly Mozart Festival singing Mozart's Requiem with Louis Langrée for the closing night of the festival, and a debut with Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for Haydn's *Seven Last Words* with the Orion String Quartet. Mr. Green will appear in recital with Dayton Opera at the Schuster Performing Arts Center.

In the fall of 2016, Little, Brown published *Sing for Your Life*, by *New York Times* journalist Daniel Bergner. The book tells the story of Mr. Green's personal and artistic journey: from a trailer park in southeastern Virginia and from time spent in Virginia's juvenile facility of last resort to the Met stage. The *New York Times Book Review* called the book "one of the most inspiring stories I've come across in a long time," and the *Washington Post* called it a "vital, compelling, and highly recommended book." *Sing for your Life* has been honored with a number of recognitions including the *New York Times* bestseller and editor's choice, a *Washington Post* Notable Book, and a *Publishers Weekly* Book of the Year.

ABOUT MARIAN ANDERSON

American contralto Marian Anderson was one of the most celebrated singers of the 20th century. She became an important figure in the struggle for African American artists to overcome racial prejudice in the United States when, in 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution refused permission for her to sing to an integrated audience in Constitution Hall. The incident thrust Anderson into the spotlight of the international community on a level unusual for a classical musician. With the aid of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and her husband President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Anderson performed a critically acclaimed open-air concert on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. before a crowd of more than 75,000 people and a radio audience of millions.

She continued to break barriers, becoming the first African American artist to perform at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on January 7, 1955. Her performance as Ulrica in Giuseppe Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* was the only time she sang an opera role on stage. She later worked for several years as a delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Committee and for the U.S. Department of State, giving concerts all over the world. She participated in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, singing at the March on Washington in 1963. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963, the Kennedy Center Honors in 1978, the National Medal of Arts in 1986, and a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1991.

The impetus for The Marian Anderson Vocal Award was provided by June Goodman of Danbury, Connecticut, a friend of Anderson's who wished to recognize the outstanding qualities of the groundbreaking African American singer. The Marian Anderson Award Foundation then established the Award at Fairfield County's Community Foundation. In September 2002, the Kennedy Center and Fairfield County's Community Foundation collaborated to create a permanent tribute to Anderson's historic artistic achievements by presenting a cash prize of \$10,000 and a recital at the Kennedy Center for one outstanding singer.

ABOUT WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA

Washington National Opera (WNO) is one of the leading opera companies in the United States. Under the leadership of newly appointed General Director Timothy O'Leary and world-renowned Artistic Director Francesca Zambello, the company presents a diverse repertory of grand opera across three main venues of the Kennedy Center. From classic operas to more contemporary pieces each season, WNO's artistic output also includes several commissioned American works and a variety of special concerts, youth operas, and events.

Recent celebrated productions have included the world premiere of Philip Glass's reconceived *Appomattox*, presented in conjunction with cultural events throughout Washington, D.C.; the powerful performances of Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars*; and the massive feat of WNO's first-complete *Ring Cycle*, which was helmed by Zambello and played to sold-out houses following international acclaim.

Founded in 1956 and an artistic affiliate of the Kennedy Center since 2011, WNO has a storied legacy of more than 100 new productions, plus world premieres, international tours, live recordings, and radio broadcasts, as well as innovative education and community-engagement programs. Throughout its history, WNO has been led by titans in the opera field, including the legendary Plácido Domingo, who headed the company for 15 years, as well as luminaries such as Music Director Emeritus Heinz Fricke and former Director of Artistic Operations Christina Scheppelmann.

Among the company's most successful programs is the *American Opera Initiative (AOI)*, a commissioning program that develops new one-act works for WNO's annual festival. By mentoring emerging composers and librettists, the Initiative works to expand the American operatic repertory and enhance its relevance to our time. Since its inception, AOI has commissioned 28 chamber opera world premieres, with some going on to future productions around the country.

With a commitment toward youth, WNO contributes to the future of opera through two signature artist-development programs. The Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, now in its 17th season, is one of the nation's most competitive professional training programs, providing two years of intensive study to a

highly selective cadre of young singers and collaborative pianists. Alumni of the program have won major competitions and gone on to successful careers at major opera houses worldwide. The WNO Opera Institute nurtures the ambitions of high-school-age singers from across the nation during an intensive three-week summer program held at American University in Washington.

The most popular of WNO's community-engagement programs is *Opera in the Outfield*®, a free Kennedy Center Opera House production broadcast on the high-definition scoreboard at Nationals Park. The company's other education programs include the Kids Create Opera program at local elementary schools, Look-In performances for students in grades 3–8, and the Student Dress Rehearsal Program for middle and high school students. The company also offers free Opera Insights programs before every performance in the Opera House.

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FUNDING CREDITS

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TICKETS & INFORMATION

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