

Lyric

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

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PHOTO: Shervin Lainez

**In an unforgettable evening of vocal music,
Lyric Unlimited presents the Chicago premiere of**
Cycles of My Being
starring Lawrence Brownlee, tenor
composed by Tyshawn Sorey with lyrics by Terrance Hayes
Thursday, February 22 at 7pm at the
DuSable Museum of African American History

Tickets on sale now

Chicago (1/4/2018)—Lyric Unlimited, a division of **Lyric Opera of Chicago**, is excited to present ***Cycles of My Being***, a song cycle exploring the realities of life as a black man in America. Composed by **Tyshawn Sorey** with lyrics by **Terrance Hayes**, the Chicago-premiere event will star celebrated tenor **Lawrence Brownlee** in a solo recital with pianist **Myra Huang** on **Thursday, February 22 at 7pm at the DuSable Museum of African American History**. ***Cycles of My Being*** is a co-commission with **Opera Philadelphia**,

and **Carnegie Hall**. Tickets are just \$15 (\$10 for DuSable Museum members) and are available now at lyricopera.org/cycles or by calling 312.827.5600.

Immediately following its world-premiere at Opera Philadelphia on February 20, 2018, **Cycles of My Being** will have its Chicago premiere in a one-night-only performance, presented during Black History Month at the **DuSable Museum** (740 E 56th Pl, Chicago). Carnegie Hall will be the setting for its New York premiere on April 24, where it will be presented as part of the venue's *125 Commissions Project* in Zankel Hall.

This new song cycle is the creation of a dynamic trio linked through classical music and jazz: composer **Tyshawn Sorey**, a "prodigious multi-instrumentalist and composer" who "transcends the borders of jazz, classical, and experimental music" (*The New Yorker*); lyricist **Terrance Hayes**, "a vital voice that explores race and art and the roving power of language" (NPR); and **Lawrence Brownlee**, one of "the world's leading bel canto tenors" (*The Associated Press*).

Named 2017 Male Singer of the Year by the International Opera Awards and *Bachtrack*, **Brownlee** made his triumphant Lyric Opera debut in 2016 portraying Prince Don Ramiro in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (*Cinderella*). He received rave reviews and was described as a "sensation" (*Chicago on the Aisle*) who "resplendently brought down the house" (*Chicago Tribune*). In March 2017, Brownlee again wowed Chicagoans as the "stunningly voiced Parker" (*Opera News*) in Daniel Schnyder's jazz-inspired *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD* in a Lyric Unlimited presentation at the Harris Theater. This season at Lyric, Brownlee will take on the blazing bel-canto role of Arturo in Bellini's *I Puritani* (Feb. 4 – 28).

"I'm honored to be working with the extraordinary talents of Tyshawn and Terrance on this new song cycle, and I'm grateful to Opera Philadelphia, Carnegie Hall, and Lyric Unlimited for making it possible," said **Lawrence Brownlee**. "In these divided times, we hope to create something that brings people together with mutual respect, understanding, and communication across races and generations."

"I feel unbelievably lucky to be collaborating with Lawrence Brownlee and Tyshawn Sorey," said **Terrance Hayes**. "They are two amazing beings and artists. They've given me a means to explore the kinships between poetry and music, song and storytelling. I hope our results expand notions of operatic and poetic expression, and most vitally, notions and expressions of black male subjectivity."

"Lyric Unlimited strives to collaborate with organizations across Chicago, commission and present new works exploring relevant issues and stories, and introduce opera and singing to new audiences," says Vice President for Lyric Unlimited, **Cayenne Harris**. "This exciting new song cycle allows us to do all of these things. We are thrilled to be partnering with the DuSable Museum to present Lawrence Brownlee this February."

Lawrence Brownlee Winner of 2017's "Male Singer of the Year" award from both the International Opera Awards and *Bachtrack*, the American tenor has previously triumphed as Arturo in Bellini's *I*

Puritani at the Metropolitan Opera, the Zurich Opera House, Seattle Opera, and Tivolis Koncertsalen (Copenhagen). Brownlee's artistry has also earned acclaim at the leading houses of London, Vienna, Paris, Berlin, Madrid, and Brussels, as well as the Salzburg Festival. This season, Brownlee joins Opera Philadelphia as artistic advisor and will be heard as Idreno/*Semiramide* (Covent Garden), the title role/*Le Comte Ory* (Zurich), and Ernesto/*Don Pasquale* (Paris). Other successes include appearances in Seattle (*Don Giovanni*), the Met (*La donna del lago*, *Cinderella*, *The Barber of Seville*), Munich (*Così fan tutte*, *Semiramide*, *Il turco in Italia*), Pittsburgh Opera (*La fille du régiment*), and Opera Philadelphia (world premiere of *Charlie Parker's YARDBIRD*, reprised at New York's Apollo Theater and Chicago's Harris Theater). He was the first to sing Rinaldo/*Armida* at the Met, a much-acclaimed portrayal seen worldwide in HD (available on DVD). Brownlee has performed with many major orchestras including those of Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, New York, Berlin, Rome, and Munich. He has recorded *Barber*, *Carmina Burana*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and four solo albums, including Grammy-nominated *Virtuoso Rossini Arias*, and his recent release *Allegro Io Son*.

Terrance Hayes Author, poet, *New York Times Magazine* poetry editor, and University of Pittsburgh professor Terrance Hayes "puts invincibly restless wordplay at the service of strong emotions" (*The New York Times*). His work has been recognized with honors including the 2010 National Book Award (for *Lighthouse*), a Whiting Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and a MacArthur Fellowship. His most recent poetry collection, *How to Be Drawn*, was a finalist for both the 2015 National Book Award and the 2016 National Book Critics Circle Award, besides receiving the 2016 NAACP Image Award for Poetry.

Tyshawn Sorey Perhaps best known as an improvisational jazz percussionist, Tyshawn Sorey is a lauded composer and multi-instrumentalist who "is able to compose and dissect his own music at the highest level, and also to detail the historical context of his work" (*The New York Times*). A 2017 recipient of a MacArthur "genius grant" Fellowship, his work defies categorization, straddling genres and combining African diasporic, avant-garde, and western classical music through improvisation. *The New Yorker* called his 2016 release *The Inner Spectrum of Variables* "a creation that defeats all preconceptions."

Myra Huang Acclaimed by *Opera News* as being "among the top accompanists of her generation," pianist Myra Huang regularly performs in recitals and chamber music concerts around the world. In addition to many chamber music concerts and recitals at the Palau De Les Arts in Valencia, Spain, she recently performed recitals at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall, the University of Chicago, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York with tenor Nicholas Phan, and at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall with soprano Susanna Phillips. She also performs regularly in association with the Marilyn Horne Foundation at Carnegie Hall and throughout the US. Huang has served on the music staffs of the Washington National Opera and New York City Opera. She works annually with Plácido Domingo for his competition Operalia in different countries around the world. Among the conductors she has worked with are James Conlon, Marco Armiliato, Riccardo Frizza, Richard Hickox, Christopher Hogwood, Daniel Oren, Robert Spano, Patrick

Summers, and Xian Zhang. From 2006 until 2008, she was a member of the music staff at the Palau De Les Arts in Valencia, Spain where she worked closely with the artistic director, Lorin Maazel as well as Zubin Mehta. In 2010, Myra was invited by the Metropolitan Opera to accompany the singers in the Metropolitan Opera National Council competition on stage at the Met. A graduate of the prestigious Houston Grand Opera Studio, Huang received her Bachelor degree in piano performance from The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Martin Canin, and her Master of Music degree in collaborative piano from The Manhattan School under Warren Jones.

About Lyric Unlimited

Lyric Unlimited is a long-term, evolving initiative that encompasses company activities that are not part of Lyric's mainstage opera season. Its mission is to provide a relevant cultural service to communities throughout the Chicago area and to advance the development of opera by exploring how opera as an art form can resonate more powerfully with people of multiple backgrounds, ethnicities, and interests. It also leads the development of innovative partnerships with a wide range of cultural, community, and educational organizations to create a breadth of programming through which Chicagoans of all ages can connect with Lyric. In the 2016/17 season, more than 100,000 individuals participated in Lyric Unlimited programs.

For more information about Lyric Unlimited program offerings, visit lyricopera.org/lyricunlimited.

About Lyric

Lyric Opera of Chicago's mission is to express and promote the life-changing, transformational, revelatory power of great opera. Lyric exists to provide a broad, deep, and relevant cultural service to Chicago and the nation, and to advance the development of the art form.

Founded in 1954, Lyric is dedicated to producing and performing consistently thrilling, entertaining, and thought-provoking opera with a balanced repertoire of core classics, lesser-known masterpieces, and new works; to creating an innovative and wide-ranging program of community engagement and educational activities; and to developing exceptional emerging operatic talent.

Under the leadership of general director Anthony Freud, music director Sir Andrew Davis, and creative consultant Renée Fleming, Lyric strives to become The Great North American Opera Company for the 21st century: a globally significant arts organization embodying the core values of excellence, relevance, and fiscal responsibility.

To learn more about Lyric's current season, go to lyricopera.org. You can also join the conversation with @LyricOpera on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. #Lyric1718 #LongLivePassion

About Opera Philadelphia

Opera Philadelphia is committed to embracing innovation and developing opera for the 21st century. Described as "the very model of a modern opera company" by the *Washington Post*, Opera Philadelphia was the only American finalist for the 2016 International Opera Award for Best Opera Company. After opening its 2017-18 season with the immersive O17 festival, Opera Philadelphia returns to the Academy of Music with two new spring productions: George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* (February 9-18, 2018) and Bizet's *Carmen* (April 27-May 6, 2018). The company's second fall festival, O18, will be held from September 20-30, 2018. For more information, visit operaphila.org.

About Carnegie Hall

Since 1891, **Carnegie Hall** has set the international standard for excellence in performance. Its walls have echoed with applause for the world's outstanding classical music artists as they have for the greatest popular musicians and many prominent dancers, authors, comedians, social crusaders, and world figures who have appeared on its stages.

Carnegie Hall presents a wide range of performances each season on its three stages—the renowned Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage, intimate Weill Recital Hall, and innovative Zankel Hall—including concert series curated by acclaimed artists and composers; citywide arts festivals featuring collaborations with leading New York City cultural institutions; orchestral performances, chamber music, new music concerts, and recitals; and the best in jazz, world, and popular music. Complementing these performance activities, Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute creates extensive music education and social impact programs that annually serve more than 500,000 people in the New York City area, nationally, and internationally, playing a central role in Carnegie Hall's commitment to making great music accessible to as many people as possible. For more information, visit carnegiehall.org.

About The DuSable Museum of African American History

The DuSable Museum of African American History is one of the oldest institutions of its kind in the country. Our mission is to promote understanding and inspire appreciation of the achievements, contributions and experiences of African American history, culture and art. The DuSable Museum is a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate. For more information on the Museum and its programs, please call 773-947-0600 or visit us at www.dusablemuseum.org. The DuSable Museum of African American History gratefully acknowledges the Chicago Park District's partnership and also thanks United Airlines, the official airline of the DuSable Museum, for its support.



Cycles of My Being is co-commissioned by Lyric Unlimited: a division of Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opera Philadelphia, and Carnegie Hall

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