

Dear Esteemed Guests,

Welcome to Lift Ev'ry Voice, the third concert of our 2024–2025 season, celebrating the 125th anniversary of James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson's iconic hymn, "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

We are honored to commemorate this milestone in Jacksonville, where this powerful anthem was first written and performed. Its enduring message of hope, resilience, and justice continues to inspire generations.

Tonight's program explores themes of perseverance, unity, and the ongoing journey toward justice and equality. Through this music, we honor the Johnson brothers' legacy and the transformative power of art to uplift and inspire.

As you enjoy this evening, we invite you to reflect on how music fosters change, strengthens communities, and brings people together. Your support enables us to continue sharing these important stories through music.

The Ritz Chamber Players are deeply grateful for your presence and support. We look forward to sharing more unforgettable performances with you.

With deepest gratitude,

Terrance L. Patterson Ritz Chamber Players Artistic Director



OUR MISSION

To showcase diversity by spotlighting the extraordinary artistry of African American musicians, past and present. RCP seeks to transcend cultural boundaries and amplify the rich mosaic of our society through the universal language of music. Above all, we want to share the transformative power of classical music and ensure it is accessible to everyone.

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ABOUT THE RITZ CHAMBER PLAYERS

CONCERT PROGRAM

THE RITZ CHAMBER PLAYERS (RCP), is hailed by *The Baltimore Sun* as "one of the most interesting and dynamic ensembles to emerge in recent years." Boasting some of the world's preeminent musicians spanning the African diaspora, it brings a fresh, new energy to the classical music genre. Its members perform with prestigious organizations such as the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra and the London Symphony.

Founded in 2002 by clarinetist and Artistic Director Terrance Patterson, RCP present a landmark series at the Terry Concert Hall at Jacksonville University in Jacksonville, Florida, which combines exceptional artistry on stage with inspiring educational programs in schools and throughout the community. Through its concert series in Jacksonville and performances across the United States, RCP continues to build the participation of multicultural audiences that reflect our diverse society.

Called "a remarkable ensemble," the group's flexible make-up allows for many astonishing combinations of virtuoso players, leading to "riveting" performances of the standard classical music repertoire. RCP are also unique in their dedication to showcase the works of African-American composers with exceedingly artistic and informed interpretations.

RCP made its highly successful début concert at New York's Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall to a standing-room-only crowd, with critics proclaiming the group's performance "extraordinary" and "vital and fresh." Most recently, the ensemble's performances have been enthusiastically received in Miami, Atlanta, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Raleigh, the British Virgin Islands, Chicago, and Seattle, and in several New York venues, including Rockefeller University and Lincoln Center.

RCP, one of the country's most significant chamber ensembles, celebrated its international radio début on the BBC World Service and WYNC New York with a concert broadcast to more than 30 countries, and its first national television appearance on the 37th Annual NAACP Image Awards. RCP have been guests of the highly-praised National Public Radio shows *Performance Today* and the *Tavis Smiley Show* and are regular guests of the Madison and Amelia Island Chamber Music Festivals.

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON (1871-1938) Lift Every Voice and Sing (1900)

RODNEY HURST, SR., HISTORIAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS ICON

DUKE ELLINGTON (1899-1974)

In the Beginning God from Sacred Concert No. 1

THOMAS A. DORSEY (1899-1993)
Precious Lord, Take My Hand

FLORENCE PRICE (1887-1953)
Song to the Dark Virgin Text: Langston Hughes

FLORENCE PRICE (1887-1953)
Resignation

TARYN "LOVEREIGNS" WHARWOOD, POET

MARGARET BONDS (1913-1972)

Three Dream Portraits Text: Langston Hughes

1. Minstrel Man 2. Dream Variation 3. I, Too

INTERMISSION

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898-1937)
"Bess, You Is My Woman Now" from Porgy and Bess

BETTY JACKSON KING (1928-1994) It's Me, O Lord

R. NATHANIEL DETT (1882-1943)
"I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Alway" from The Ordering of Moses

UZEE BROWN, JR. (b. 1950) Fix Me, Jesus

UNDINE SMITH MOORE (1904-1989)

Come Down Angels

CAROL ALEXANDER, STORYTELLER

JACQUELINE B. HAIRSTON (b. 1932)
Plenty Good Room

TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL He's Got the Whole World in His Hands (arr. Margaret Bonds)

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON (1871-1938) / JOHN ROSAMOND JOHNSON (1873-1954) Lift Every Voice and Sing (1900)

MEET THE RITZ CHAMBER PLAYERS

ALISON BUCHANAN - SOPRANO



Praised for her musical versatility, her luscious voice and her ability to communicate with an audience, British soprano Alison Buchanan is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music in London and the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Alison is the winner of the Kathleen Ferrier, the Luciano Pavarotti, the Washington International and the Maggie Teyte competitions.

As a young artist with San Francisco Opera, Alison made her debut with the company as Mimi in *La Boheme* whilst an Adler she was invited to L.A Opera to sing Nedda in *I Pagliacci* working with Placido Domingo and Franco Zeffirelli. Alison has performed with New York City Opera as Bess in *Porgy & Bess* and Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Opera company of Philadelphia, Michigan Opera and Wexford Opera. She has performed under the batons of Sir. Simon Rattle, Sir. Colin Davis, Donald Runnicles and David Robertson to name but a few, with orchestra's such as the Royal Philharmonic, the Philippines Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Kibbutz Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

More recently, Ms. Buchanan played an operatic soprano in the episode "Gardens in Bloom" on the hit Netflix series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story,* joined Marin Alsop for performances in Brazil with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, returned to the Boston Symphony Orchestra to perform in *Porgy & Bess,* gave recitals in St. Louis, Washington DC and in Jacksonville, performed the role of Janthe in *Der Vampyr* with the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, performed concerts with the Detroit Symphony and gave a recital at National Sawdust in Brooklyn. Buchanan recently released a recording of the songs of Dr. George Walker accompanied by the composer for Albany records, sang Knoxville Summer 1915, Barber, at the Kennedy Center with the Apollo Orchestra and joined members of the Boston Symphony, the New York Philharmonic and the Atlanta Symphony for the Classical Pops Festival in Barbados.

ROBERT SIMS - BARITONE



This season Robert appeared in his second telecast with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. He returned to the Oakland Symphony Orchestra singing Brahms' German Requiem, as well as solo appearances with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and at Symphony Center in Chicago. Robert made his debut with Chicago Opera Theater in the world premiere of Dan Shore's Freedom Ride and produced Masters of the Spiritual at New York's Lincoln Center. He has appeared as the leading baritone in The James Baldwin Chronicles with Renee Baker and the Chicago Modern Orchestra Project, and as Pangloss in Bernstein's Candide with the Oakland Symphony. Robert has toured Germany, Austria and Switzerland as the featured soloist with Roland Carter and the inSpirit Male Chorus performing spirituals of Noah Ryder, Roland Carter and Roland Hayes. Since his solo debut at Carnegie Hall in 2005 (featuring a special appearance by the late Odetta), Sims has made several appearances at that venue performing the spirituals of Jacqueline B. Hairston, and most notably as a featured soloist in the 2009 series, Honor! A Celebration of the African American Cultural Legacy (at the invitation of Jessye Norman). His most recent Carnegie performance was a recital honoring the late Sylvia Olden Lee. Sims has been presented in the Bay Area numerous times by Four Seasons Concerts founded by the late Dr. W. Hazaiah Williams. He sang the world premiere of Alice Walker's Peace is Always a Good Idea for the Afro Solo Music Festival in San Francisco and Noah Gasser's Black Suite Blues with the Oakland Symphony Orchestra. He has been presented in concert by Friends of Negro Spirituals and has premiered Lena McLin's I'm a Soldier with the Chicago Sinfonietta among other orchestras throughout the U.S. Sims founded and toured nationally with the ensemble, Three Generations. This trio which specializes in American spirituals and folk songs has included the renowned George Shirley, Kenneth Overton, the late William Warfield and Benjamin Matthews. He has also performed with the trio Simon, Sykes & Sims (with Simon Estes and Jubilant Sykes) singing spirituals and American songs. Sims has appeared on numerous radio and television programs including Bill McLaughlin's Exploring Music, NPR's Performance Today, The Leonard Lopate Show, Conversations with Ed Tracy, The Gospel Experience with Emmit Powell, The Studs Terkel Program, and two PBS specials, In the Spirit, and the just released Voices for Freedom: the Hyers Sisters' Dream, Change, and Legacy. Sims has performed as a soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in the televised Songs from

the Soul with Robert Sims: A Heritage Special. He had several engagements on Hour of Power from the Crystal Cathedral. He has sung at New York's Lincoln Center with the Ritz Chamber Players and a solo recital, "The Spirituals of Roland Hayes" narrated by George Shirley. Sims has worked with several composers and arrangers including Lena McLin, David Baker, Moses Hogan, Roland Carter, Undine Smith Moore, Jacqueline Hairston, Wendell Logan, William Dawson, and Brazeal Dennard. He recently released a CD of spirituals arranged by Roland Hayes which accompanied the prize-winning biography of the celebrated tenor, Roland Hayes: The Legacy of an American Tenor (in collaboration with Christopher A. Brooks, Indiana University Press 2015). Other recordings include "Songs From Spoon River" by Lita Grier, "Soul of a Singer," "In the Spirit," and "Three Generations." He has three recordings produced by the late Moses Hogan including Home in a-Dat Rock, Deep River, and La Magie des plus beaux Negro spirituals. After winning the Friedrich Schorr Competition, Mr. Sims appeared in Massenet's Cendrillon, which won the National Opera America Award. He made his Goodman Theater debut in Kurt Weil's Lost In the Stars under the direction of Frank Galati, and sang the role of Dr. Malatesta in Don Pasquale with Opera Carolina. His other operatic credits include roles in Romeo et Juliette and Die Zauberflöte, Porgy and Bess, La Traviata, I Pagliacci, Cosi Fan Tutte and Le Nozze di Figaro. He is the recipient of the Living Heritage Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award and the Friends of Negro Spirituals Heritage Keeper's Award. Mr. Sims is the donor of the Robert Sims Spiritual Prize for the George Shirley Vocal Competition. He is an alumnus of Oberlin Conservatory, SUNY Binghamton, Northwestern University, and Music Academy of the West.



DAMIEN SNEED - PIANIST, COMPOSER



As a multi-genre recording artist and instrumentalist, Damien Sneed is a pianist, vocalist, organist, composer, conductor, arranger, producer, and arts educator whose work spans multiple genres. He has worked with jazz, classical, pop, and R&B legends, including the late Aretha Franklin and Jessye Norman, which he is featured on Norman's final recording, *Bound For The Promised Land* on Albany Records. He also worked with Wynton Marsalis, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Ashford & Simpson, J'Nai Bridges, Lawrence Brownlee, Brandie Inez Sutton and many others. Sneed has served as music director for Grammy Award-winning gospel artists The Clark Sisters, Richard Smallwood, Donnie McClurkin, Hezekiah Walker, Marvin Sapp, Karen Clark Sheard, Dorinda Clark-Cole and Kim Burrell, among others. Sneed is a 2020 Dove Award winner and 2021 NAACP Image Award winner for his work as a featured producer and writer on the Clark Sisters' newest project, "The Return," released on March 13, 2020.

Sneed also has performed at important national and international events, including the 2012 Olympics in London and activities related to the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Sneed performed in Washington, DC, at "A Celebration of America" at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Art's Eisenhower Theater on the eve of President Obama's inauguration and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in 2013. The event was hosted by Angela Bassett, Courtney Vance, and Wynton Marsalis and retired United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. In addition, in 2008, he conducted the world premiere of Wynton Marsalis' Abyssinian Mass with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and a 150-voice choir. He has also conducted the Mass in London and on a 16-city U.S. tour.

Sneed is currently a faculty member of the Manhattan School of Music, where he teaches graduate-level courses in conducting, African American Music History, a singer/songwriter ensemble, a gospel music ensemble, and private lessons in piano, voice, and composition. He recently joined the esteemed faculty of Michigan State University as artist-in-residence for the 2020 – 2021 school year. His other professional affiliations have included The Juilliard School as a staff accompanist, Jazz at Lincoln Center as an artistic consultant, and the City University of New York (CUNY) as a professor of music. In 2015, Sneed established the Damien Sneed Performing Arts Institute, a division of the Damien Sneed Foundation.



TERRANCE L. PATTERSON - CLARINET



Terrance L. Patterson is Founder and Artistic Director of the Ritz Chamber Players which is hailed by *The Baltimore Sun* as "one of the most interesting and dynamic ensembles to emerge in recent years." Jacksonville native, Clarinetist Terrance L. Patterson, has performed in Paris, London, Milan, Brussels, Belgrade, Munich, Amsterdam, Moscow, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Miami, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and New York. He has performed with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, the Sphinx Symphony of Detroit and the Nashville, Florida West Coast, Huntsville, Festival, and Las Vegas Symphonies. He attended the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University where he studied with clarinetist Lorin Kitt, principal clarinetist of the National Symphony Orchestra. As an educator, Terrance Patterson has taught at the Florida State College at Jacksonville and the University of North Florida.

Terrance L. Patterson was awarded the first Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures from The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida which recognizes an artist whose work brings distinction to Northeast Florida and is named for the late Ann McDonald Baker. He also received one of the Boundless: 40 Years, 40 Icons Awards from the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville giving to individuals that demonstrated continuous significant support of arts and culture in our community and has also been the recipient of the first ONYX Awards for Distinction in Music, the Gateways Music Festival's Distinguish Achievements in Music and the Aspire Award from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra!

SPECIAL GUESTS

CAROL J. ALEXANDER - STORYTELLER



Carol J. Alexander is an arts management executive, producer, storyteller and educator with a passion for culture and history that has taken her around the globe, led to the founding of two Florida museums, a theater, and the renovation of the National Museum of Liberia, and fostered her success in the business and nonprofit worlds. As President & Chief Creative Officer of MaBu: A Cultural Resource, Carol assists organizations and individuals seeking to deepen their understanding of themselves and the cultures around them.

Prior to her current endeavors, Carol was Executive Director of Jacksonville's prestigious Ritz Theatre & LaVilla Museum, which celebrates and preserves the performing and visual arts legacy – as well as the historic and cultural experience – of African Americans in Northeast Florida. The founding director of the museum and theater, and driving force behind the creation of the \$6M, 32,000 s.f. facility, Carol guided the institution's artistic and educational programming for 14 years. In the process, she made the Ritz the leading African

American arts institution in Northeast Florida. She also drew to Jacksonville luminaries such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Ossie Davis, Eartha Kitt, Bobby Blue Bland, Ashford and Simpson, KEM, Ahmad Jamal, Les Ballets Africains, Step Afrika, Sonya Sanchez, Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Lady Smith Black Mambazo, Nikki Giovanni and Esperanza Spalding, among many others.

Carol's groundbreaking work at the museum included the creation of an animatronics presentation celebrating Jacksonville's native sons James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson, along with a permanent exhibit on the rich history of African Americans in Northeast Florida. She also welcomed numerous traveling exhibitions highlighting the works of artists such as Jonathan Green, Benny Andrews and Baba Ishangi.

RODNEY HURST - CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, HISTORIAN



Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr., is a father, a grandfather, a great-grandfather, a widower, a cancer survivor, a civil rights activist, a Black historian, a military veteran, and the award-winning author of four books.

His first book, *It Was Never About a Hot Dog and a Coke*®! is a personal account of the 1960 sit-in demonstrations in Jacksonville,

Florida, and Ax Handle Saturday. It recounts the segregated civic, political, and educational climate of Jacksonville, Florida, in the 1950s and the 1960s, the 1960 Jacksonville Youth Council NAACP sit-ins, and the violent event, Ax Handle Saturday. Due to the black-out of local news about these important civil rights events in Jacksonville, Hurst's book is the only historically accurate description of those sit-ins and the violence of Ax Handle Saturday. *It was never about a hot dog and a Coke!* is the winner of over a dozen awards, including the 2008 USA National Best Books Awards national book competition First Place Gold Medal Award for Multicultural Nonfiction and the Florida Book Awards Bronze Medal for Nonfiction.

Unless WE Tell It...It Never Gets Told! Hurst's second book relates stories about Jacksonville's Black History and Civil Rights History. It was one of five finalists for the Multicultural Non-Fiction Award by the National Best Books Awards national book competition. It was also honored with the 2017 City of Jacksonville's Historic Preservation Commission Award.

His third book, *Never Forget Who You Are: Conversations about Racism and Identity Development*, which he co-authored with Dr. Rudy F. Jamison Jr., discusses Racism and identity development as seen through Mr. Hurst's and Dr. Jamison's eyes. The book review site *Readers View* awarded the book its 2021 Nonfiction "Book of the Year" and its 2021 Grand Prize Winner in its national book competition.

Hurst's fourth book, *Black and Brilliant*, written for 12-18-year-olds, reflects on the legacy of Black America with Hurst's remembrances as a pre-teen and a young teenager and the influences on his life to make him proud of his Blackness and piquing his interest in Black History. *Black and Brilliant* is the recipient of four awards in the "Reader Views National Literary Awards." - Gold medal regional winner, Young Adult Nonfiction, Teen Non-Fiction, and Regional Book of the Year. *Black and Brilliant* also receives the Gold Medal First Place for Multicultural Non-Fiction, Juvenile-Young Adult, ages 12-18 and Regional Book of the Year by the Independent Publishers Book Awards.

Hurst is a native of Jacksonville, Florida, and a 1960 high school graduate of segregated Northwestern Junior-Senior High School in Jacksonville. He was the sixteen-year-old President of the Jacksonville Youth Council NAACP and was one of the leaders of the 1960 sit-in demonstrations.

Hurst served two four-year terms on the Jacksonville City Council and is responsible for numerous "firsts" in the Jacksonville Community. Hurst was one of the thirteen original national recipients of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Television Fellowships.

He was the first Black to co-host a television talk show on PBS Channel WJCT and was the first Black male hired at the Prudential South Central Home Office in Jacksonville, Florida.

In addition, Hurst was the first Black to serve as the Executive Director of the State of Florida's Construction Industry Licensing Board.

He is a life member of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and is a Silver Life Member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Hurst is a veteran of the United States Air Force.

Hurst speaks extensively on Civil Rights, Black History, and Racism. Hurst was the keynote speaker at the Induction Ceremony of Harriette and Harry T. Moore in the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame.

Hurst nominated his mentor, civil rights icon Rutledge H. Pearson, and his longtime friend and civil rights icon Dr. Arnett Girardeau to the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame. Mr. Pearson was inducted post-humously in 2016, and Dr. Girardeau was inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame in June 2017. Unfortunately, Dr. Girardeau died four months later. Hurst is also the Historian of the Florida State Conference of NAACP Branches.

Hurst is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Visionary Award, presented by the National Alumni Association of Bethune-Cookman University; The Clanzel T. Brown Award, presented by the Jacksonville Urban League; the Outstanding Alumnus Award, presented by the National Alumni Association of Edward Waters College; and the "Living Legacy" award given by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). Hurst's image appears on two public art murals in Jacksonville.

Hurst is the father of two sons, Rodney II (Vandlyn) and Todd. He is the grandfather of Marquiette, and Jasmine, Rodney II's daughters. Hurst's eldest granddaughter, Marquiette, and her husband, Kyle, are the parents of Everly Ann, Hurst's first great-grandchild. Hurst worships at the First Baptist Church of Oakland where Rev. Dr. Christopher McKee is the pastor.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO



Taryn "LoveReigns" Wharwood, Creative Director of ArtsRide Youth Collective and recipient of the Robert Arleigh White Award for Arts Advocacy, is a multifaceted creative force dedicated to empowering her community. As a poet, writer, emcee, and founder of initiatives like Artis(Tree) Live, The Closet Jax, and The Cypher Open Mic Poetry & Soul, she has left an indelible mark on the city's arts scene. With her inspiring presence and commitment to creating spaces for growth and self-expression, Love truly lives up to her name.

Through her words, her aura, and her indomitable spirit, Love exudes love in every facet of her being. Meeting her is an experience that underscores why Love truly does Reign. Her impact on the artistic community and beyond is a testament to her unwavering commitment to uplifting, inspiring, and creating spaces for self-expression and growth.

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CREATIVE ARTS SERIES UPCOMING EVENTS:

Jacksonville University Camerata Spring Concert: Serenade
January 17 and January 18

Intermezzo Afternoon Series

Wednesday, February 12, at 4:30 PM

Letters From Composers: Spanish and American Art Song Thursday, February 13, at 7:30 PM

Homage

Saturday, February 15, at 7:30 PM

JUWE/FCWS Composer Concert: Carol Brittin Chambers

Saturday, February 22, at 7:30 PM

Percussion Studio Recital

Tuesday, February 25, at 7:30 PM

On Equity and Equality
Wednesday, February 26, at 7:30 PM

Guest Artist Silver Aimonäe Thursday, February 27, at 7:30 PM

Intermezzo Afternoon Series Tuesday, March 4, at 4:30 PM

Guest Artist Adam Larson

Wednesday, March 5 and Thursday, March 6 Concert: Thursday, March 6, at 7:30 PM

Subscribe to the Linda Berry Stein College of Fine Arts & Humanities YouTube channel to experience our virtual Creative Arts Series events.

For the latest updates and news, follow us on social media and email steincollege@ju.edu to join the Linda Berry Stein College of Fine Arts & Humanities electronic mailing list.

View our event calendar at www.ju.edu/steincollege

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Zimmerman Family Foundation

2024/2025 Remaining Season: Lift Every Voice

The Ties That Bind | Saturday, April 26, 2025

Illustrating the indomitable human spirit, this profound show commemorates the memory of Holocaust victims on Jewish Holocaust Memorial Day.

Juneteenth: Voices of Freedom | Saturday, June 21, 2025

A joyous concert observing the emancipation of enslaved African Americans in the United States, celebrating a future of progress and equality for all.

Unlock the Power of Music with Your Support

RCP has been a beacon of cultural excellence and diversity in Jacksonville for over two decades. Supporting RCP isn't just philanthropy—it's a gateway to enriching cultural experiences and fostering diversity in the arts.

All shows begin at 7:30 pm and are held at Terry Concert Hall, Jacksonville University. Series concerts are FREE and open to the public.





Contact

Ritz Chamber Players • Ritz Chamber Music Society, Inc.
Jacksonville Center for the Performing Arts

300 Water Street, Suite 200 Jacksonville, Florida 32202 www.ritzchamberplayers.org