

The

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Opera Columbus



Greater Columbus Arts Council
Supporting the Arts in Central Ohio



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CardinalHealth

Soprano **Karolyn Lee Gholston**
Soprano **DeMeeshia W. Marshall**
Soprano **Keyona Willis**
Baritone **Justin T. Swain**
Pianist **Barbara Brenton Sahr**
Stage Manager **Richard Celestina**
Director **Destiny Coleman**

The Voice of Freedom introduces audiences to the operatic art form by celebrating African-American cultural history through song. Universal in its emotional and musical appeal, this unique production will highlight spirituals, gospel, and works from the Harlem Renaissance. *The Voice of Freedom* aims to share the African-American experience with audiences of all ages, races, and religions.

Concept and creation by Destiny Coleman, Opera Columbus
Program Sources: National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, PoetryFoundation.org, History.com, and PBS.org



KAROLYN LEE GHOLSTON has gained a stellar reputation in operatic and recital works in central Ohio. She is a native of Altoona,

Pennsylvania and received a BA from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania in music performance. She went on to earn her M.M in Performance/Pedagogy from Ohio University. She has won first place in the National Association for Teachers of Singing Competition, Chad Williamson Scholarship Competition and second place in the Leontyne Price Vocal Arts Competition in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Recent engagements have included the role Kate Pinkerton in Opera Columbus' production of *Madama Butterfly*, Guest Artist in "*I, Too Sing America*", Columbus' Harlem Renaissance Celebration, Annie in Opera Columbus' world

premiere *The Flood* workshop, Anna (Donna Anna) in Opera Columbus' production of *#UncleJohn*, which is an adaptation of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and the Infirmary Nun in Opera Project Columbus' production of *Suor Angelica*. Karolyn will also be a guest artist in Opera Columbus' *The Journey* program in Jan. 2019. Other roles include Lucia in Nino Rota's *I Due Timidi* with Opera Project Columbus, Musetta in *La Bohème* with the first collaboration of Shadow Box and Opera Columbus "Opera on the Edge", Musetta in the Firewater Arts Festival, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* in Firenze, Italy, with Florence Voice Seminar, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Minty Rabbit in *Barefoot* and Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* with the Opera Columbus Outreach and Education program.

Along with her concert and solo work she has done extensive chorus work in *Aida*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La Bohème*, *The Pearl Fishers* and *Turandot* all with Opera Columbus.

Karolyn also teaches private voice in her studio in Dublin, Ohio.



DEMEESHIA W. MARSHALL is from Columbus Ohio. She has been singing and performing since age 5. DeMeeshia graduated with a

BM in Vocal Music performance at The Ohio State University. There she studied classical, opera music. DeMeeshia has traveled with Opera Columbus' education outreach program, where she played the lead role of *Cinderella*. DeMeeshia is also skilled in other genres, such as jazz, gospel, musical theatre etc. DeMeeshia has performed live on TV stations such as *The Word Network* multiple times. In 2016 she was crowned the Voice of Columbus and aired on NBC 4 news. DeMeeshia plans to one day open her own performing arts center for all ages and spread the love and passion of music.



KEYONA WILLIS, Lyric Soprano, recently had the pleasure of singing Mozart's *Requiem*, as the soprano soloist, with Capriccio

Columbus and with the Westerville Symphony Orchestra. Last spring, Ms. Willis performed with the Mansfield Chorus as the soprano soloist singing Haydn's *Theresienne Mass*. Ms. Willis portrayed Mimi in Opera Columbus' *La Bohème* Opera on the Edge, and was in New York portraying Alice Ford in Verdi's *Falstaff* with Prelude to Performance. She helped premiere a new work, *The Ruby Elzy Story*, inspired by

David Weaver's book, *Black Diva of the Thirties*. In 2010, Ms. Willis won the Women in Music Competition. Other notable performances include: Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Vitellia (*La Clemenza di Tito*), Aida (Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*), Adolfo (*Faramondo*), Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*), Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Polly (*The Threepenny Opera*), Susannah (*Tintypes*), Monica (*The Medium*), and Rosa Bud (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*). Ms. Willis obtained her Bachelor of Music degree from Otterbein College and her Master of Music and Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from The Ohio State University. Ms. Willis is a proud member of the Actor's Equity Association and the National Association of Teachers Association.



JUSTIN T. SWAIN (Fields) holds both the Master of Music in Vocal Performance and the Master of Arts in Vocal Pedagogy from The Ohio State

University, where he studied in the studios of both Dr. Scott McCoy and Dr. Robin Rice.

A Columbus native, Justin has been featured in the Columbus Italian Festival, in concert with Harmony Project Columbus, the New Albany Symphony Orchestra, and Opera Project Columbus, and has performed numerous times with Opera Columbus as a chorister, on the main stage, as a member of their touring Education Outreach program for two seasons, and in their popular Opera On The Edge production of *La Bohème*, in which he performed the role of Marcello.

On the stage, Justin recently

performed the roles of Maximilian and Ship Captain in Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* at The Ohio State University, debuted the role of Aedeta in the first public performance of Cadman's historic opera, *Ramala: Land of Misty Water*, the role of Maestro Spinelloccio with Opera Project Columbus, and also recently performed the role of Baron Duophol in Verdi's *La Traviata* with Opera Columbus, in which he was noted by *Columbus Underground* magazine to be "a promising young talent." Justin's next engagements include the New Albany Symphony Orchestra's Holiday Concert and the role of Cascada in Opera Project Columbus' production of *The Merry Widow* in January.

Katherine Rohrer. During his time at Ohio State, he performed with the OSU Chorale, the OSU Men's Glee Club, and was involved in Ohio State's School of Music Opera Scenes. Outside of The Ohio State University, Richard is the Assistant Director of Music, a cantor, and the bass section leader at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Columbus, OH, where he also served as the Interim Choir Director in 2015. Richard has also been a member of the Lancaster Chorale since 2016 and has sung in works including Saint-Saëns' Oratorio de Noel and Mozart's *Requiem* (collaborative works with ProMusica Chamber Orchestra). Expanding his involvement in the music world, Richard worked as an Assistant Stage Manager for Opera Columbus on Verdi's *La Traviata* during the 2015–16 season and as the Stage Manager for Opera Columbus' Opera on the Edge performances of Puccini's *La Bohème* during the 2016–17 season. In the fall of 2016, Richard began coursework and research toward a PhD in Mechanical Engineering at The Ohio State University, focusing on heat transfer and fluid dynamics for turbomachinery applications.



BARBARA BRENTON SAHR

is an international vocal coach, accompanist and pianist. Graduate of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and

Westminster Choir College. Barbara has taught at OSU School of Music, Westminster Summer Sessions, and currently teaches at Capital University School of Music. She is also the musical director for Opera Goes to School with Opera Columbus.



RICHARD CELESTINA, originally from Cleveland, OH, holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

and a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. He studied as a baritone with soprano Tamara Regensburger and mezzo-soprano



DESTINY COLEMAN is the Director of Education and Artistic Administration for Opera Columbus, where she is

responsible for planning and managing the company's education and engagement programs as well as administration. In this position, Ms. Coleman manages artists, coordinates all education and engagement programming serving over 13,000 students each spring,

oversees the Cooper-Bing Vocal Competition, and serves as lead administrator.

As a mezzo-soprano, Ms. Coleman has performed roles for several productions of The Ohio State University Lyric Opera Theatre Program, including *Side by Side* by Mozart and Sondheim, Verdi's *Falstaff*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, and a new work entitled, *The Ruby Elzy Story*, inspired by David Weaver's book, *Black Diva of the Thirties*. She has

also won many awards for her vocal abilities. In 2011, Ms. Coleman performed with Heather Headley and the world-renowned tenor Andrea Bocelli. She has also performed with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra for the Fantastique Finale. Ms. Coleman holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from The Ohio State University and Master of Science in Management and Leadership from Western Governors University.

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The Flood

SOUTHERN THEATRE
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Opera Gala

VUE COLUMBUS
MAR 7, 2019

Opera Swings Jazz

SOUTHERN THEATRE
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SOUTHERN THEATRE
MAY 5, 2019

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Mon., Feb., 11, 2019
10 am & 12:30 pm • Lincoln Theatre

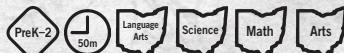


The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show

This critically acclaimed production of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* created by Jonathan Rockefeller features a menagerie of 75 lovable puppets.



Tues., March 12, 2019
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If you liked *The Voice of Freedom* come see *The Journey*



A CELEBRATION OF MUSIC INSPIRED BY AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE

LINCOLN THEATRE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2019, 7:30PM

Celebrating music spanning more than 200 years, this production will highlight gospel, spirituals, African drums, and the Harlem Renaissance. Performed by local artists and featuring arias, duets, and ensembles steeped in African-American history and culture, yet universal in their emotional and musical appeal, this unique program reintroduces a rich body of work passed down through oral history. *The Journey* aims to share the African-American experience with audiences of all ages, races, and religions.

Operating Support provided by:



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