



CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT

PENN LIVE ARTS DEBUT

VOCALS Cécile McLorin Salvant

PIANO Sullivan Fortner

PERCUSSION Keita Ogawa

FLUTE Alexa Tarantino

SUNDAY, **DECEMBER 12** @ 7 PM

Annenberg Center, Zellerbach Theatre

There will be no intermission.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Cécile McLorin Salvant (Vocals)

The world first learned of the incredible vocal artistry of Cécile McLorin Salvant when she won the prestigious 2010 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition. In just under the span of a decade, she has evolved from a darling of jazz critics and fans, to a multi-Grammy® Award-winner, to a prescient and fearless voice in music today.

Since 2010, McLorin Salvant has soared to the top of the music world, garnering praise and gathering awards. "She has poise, elegance, soul, humor, sensuality, power, virtuosity, range, insight, intelligence, depth and grace," announced Wynton Marsalis. "You get a singer like this once in a generation or two." She has been honored with top spots in *DownBeat's* Critics' Polls in the categories of "Jazz Album of the Year" and "Top Female Vocalist." NPR Music has awarded her "Best Jazz Vocal Album of the Year" and "Best Jazz Vocalist." Her debut album, *WomanChild* (2013), received a Grammy® nomination. Her following releases, *For One to Love* (2015), *Dreams and Daggers* (2017) and *The Window* (2018) all won Grammy® Awards for Best Jazz Vocal Album.

Her most recent project, *Ogresse*, is a melting pot of musical theatre and mythical storytelling, a musical narrative with genre-defying orchestration blending jazz, blue-grass, folk rhythms and chanson accents. This project is a fairytale-like musical experience, a modern-day secular cantata that highlights not only her voice, but her theatricality, and her brilliance as a songwriter and storyteller.

McLorin Salvant's gifts as an artist are rooted in her intensive study of the history of American music and her uncanny ability to curate its treasures for her audience. Her albums are explorations of the immense repository of experience and feeling that abound in popular song. She understands the special role of the musician to find and share the emotions and messages in music that speak to our past, present and future. "I am not interested in the idea of relevance," she explains. "I am interested in the idea of presence. I want to communicate across time, through time, play with time."

Onstage, her persona is often compared to that of an actress. But, as McLorin Salvant notes, "jazz would not be what it is without its theatrical origins, vaudeville, and minstrel shows." Through her selection of repertory and brilliant interpretations, she "plays with time," making the musical past speak to our contemporary world. Her unflinching performance of songs from the minstrel tradition, such as Bert William's "Nobody," challenge us to think harder about race in America today. Her ironic, even sinister, rendition of songs like "Wives and Lovers" explore the complex intertwining of sex, gender and power. Her blues numbers are bawdy and vibrant, melancholic and forlorn, insistent and emancipatory. She sings of the ecstasy and agony of love, of jubilation and dejection, of desire and being desired, of fearlessness and fragility. "I want to get as close to the center of the song as I can," McLorin Salvant explains. "When I find something beautiful and touching, I try to get close to it and share that with the audience." Immersed in the song and yet completely in control, McLorin Salvant brings her immense personality to the music—daring, witty, playful, honest and mischievous.

Sullivan Fortner (Piano)

Lauded as one of the top jazz pianists of his generation, Sullivan Fortner is recognized for his virtuosic technique and captivating performances. The winner of three prestigious awards – a Leonore Annenberg Arts Fellowship, the 2015 Cole Porter Fellowship from the American Pianists Association, and the 2016 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists – Fortner's music embodies the essence of the blues and jazz as he connects music of all eras and genres through his improvisation.

As a leader, The Sullivan Fortner Trio has performed on many of the world's most prestigious stages including Jazz at Lincoln Center, Newport Jazz Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, Discover Jazz Festival,

Tri-C Jazz Festival, Jazz Standard and the Gillmore Keyboard Festival. Fortner has been heard with other leading musicians around the world including Dianne Reeves, Roy Hargrove, Wynton Marsalis, Paul Simon, John Scofield, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Fred Hersch, Sean Jones, DeeDee Bridgewater, Roberta Gambarini, Peter Bernstein, Stefon Harris, Nicholas Peyton, Billy Hart, Dave Liebman, Gary Bartz, Etienne Charles and Christian Scott.

Fortner's foray into music education has led him to lead master classes at today's most formidable music institutions, including Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Manhattan School of Music, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NoCCA), Purdue University, Lafayette Summer Music Workshop and Belmont University (TN).

A native of New Orleans, Fortner began playing the piano at the age of seven and was hailed a virtuoso before he was out of high school. He has a Bachelor of Music degree in jazz studies from Oberlin Conservatory and a master of music in jazz performance from Manhattan School of Music.

Keita Ogawa (Percussion)

A two-time Grammy® nominee award-winner, Keita Ogawa is one of the most versatile and sought-after percussionists and drummers in New York City. He hails from Sasebo, Nagasaki, Japan, and started his music career on a drum set at the age of 15.

After performing regularly in Tokyo for several years, Ogawa decided to pursue his musical studies overseas. He was accepted into the prestigious Berklee College of Music in 2005 and studied with legendary musicians and educators such as Manuel "Egui" Castrillo, Jamey Haddad, Tito De Gracia, David Rosado and Mark Walker. Seeking full immersion into the world of Brazilian percussion, Ogawa relocated to Rio de Janeiro for three months to study with some of the country's most respected musicians including Jorginho do Pandeiro, Celsinho Silva, Kiko Freitas and Marcio Bahia, among others.

Since his arrival in America, Ogawa has worked with some of the biggest names in modern music including Yo-Yo Ma, the Assad Brothers, Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra, Romero Lubambo, Clarice Assad, Jaques Morelenbaum, Osvaldo Golijov, Les Nubians, Charlie Hunter, Benny Green, Eric Harland, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Currently, he is working on several projects with Snarky Puppy, Bokanté, Banda Magda, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Charlie Hunter, JSquad, Camila Meza and the Nectar Orchestra, Clarice Assad and more.

Ogawa can play virtually any percussion instrument and musical style with fluency and unparalleled musicality. Despite his youth, he has set an example for the next generation of world-class musicians. Ogawa's passion for crossing musical borders and uniting differences in cultures is a rare talent which he exhibits with a smile and an open heart.

Alexa Tarantino (Flute)

"[Alexa is] a one-woman wrecking crew, [...] an indomitable force for expression, education, and absolute excellence." - Wynton Marsalis, Managing and Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Alexa Tarantino is an award-winning, vibrant, young jazz saxophonist, woodwind doubler, composer and educator. Tarantino's "high-octane" (*Jazziz Magazine*) performance and "sharply plotted but gracefully unencumbered straight-ahead jazz" (*The New York Times*) compositions establish her individual voice which shines through as a dynamic performer and educator. She was recently named one of the "Top 5 Alto Saxophonists of 2019" by the *JazzTimes* Critics' Poll and nominated as a "Rising Star - Alto Saxophone" by *Downbeat Magazine's* 2021 and 2020 Critics' Polls.

She has appeared with a wide variety of ensembles including the Wynton Marsalis Septet, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Cécile McLorin Salvant Quintet and Ogresse ensembles, Ulysses Owens Jr.'s Generation Y and Big Band, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Arturo O'Farrill & The Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, and the DIVA Jazz Orchestra. She also leads the Alexa Tarantino Quartet. *Firefly*, Tarantino's third record for Posi-Tone Records released in April 2021, hit #6 on the JazzWeek charts. Her previous album, *Clarity*, peaked at #9 on the JazzWeek charts and landed at #54 for JazzWeek's Top 100 records of 2020.

Tarantino is currently on faculty for Jazz at Lincoln Center's Youth Programs (High School Jazz Academy, Let Freedom Swing/Jazz for Young People) and represents the organization as a clinician and educator for various schools, festivals and workshops. She holds a master's degree in jazz studies from The Juilliard School and bachelor's degrees in jazz saxophone performance and music education from the Eastman School of Music. Tarantino is the founder and director of the Rockport Jazz Workshop in Rockport, Massachusetts and a co-founder of A Step Ahead Jazz with pianist Steven Feifke. In February 2021, Tarantino launched her new virtual community-style jazz education platform, The Alexa Approach.