

**Daniel R. Martin Masterworks Series | Beethoven's Ninth**

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**Sunday, June 11, 2023**  
**William Saroyan Theatre**

**Karen Slack**, soprano  
**Sarah Mesko**, mezzo-soprano  
**Adam Diegel**, tenor  
**Damien Geter**, bass-baritone  
**Fresno Master Chorale**  
**Anna Hamre**, director  
**Rei Hotoda**, conductor

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**Damien Geter**

Symphony No. 1, *The Justice*  
*Symphony*

- I. Keep Your Eyes on the Prize
- II. Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- III. Ego Trippin'

**Intermission**

**Beethoven**

Symphony No. 9 in D minor,  
Op. 125 (Choral)

- I. Allegro ma non troppo e un poco maestoso
- II. Molto vivace
- III. Adagio molto e cantabile
- IV. Finale

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2022-23 Season Major Support provided by

**Daniel R. Martin Family Foundation, California Arts Council, Bonner Family Foundation, Coke and James Hallowell, Dr. & Mrs. Bernard K. Karian, J.P. Lamborn Co., Dr. J.D. Northway, Leon S. Peters Foundation and Sahm Family Foundation**

**Orchestra Roster**

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**Beethoven's Ninth**

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## Beethoven's Ninth

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### VIOLIN I

Stephanie Sant'Ambrogio, *Concertmaster*

Jay Zhong  
Calvin Lewis  
Lianna Elmore  
Amy Lindsey  
Rudolfina Sjostrand  
Erin Adams  
Yuliya Hess  
Luke Santonastaso  
Matt Oshida  
Brandon Morris  
Ivelina Kofler

### VIOLIN II

Caitlin McSherry, *Principal*  
Cynthia Stuart  
Darren Sagawa  
Joseph Galamba  
Chinh Le  
Barbara Schaefer  
Akiko Kojima  
William Chen  
Lisa Lhee  
Juan Gutierrez

### VIOLA

Dustin Budish, *Acting Principal*  
Rosalind Gratz  
Lynn Grants  
Martha Brody  
Tianna Heppner  
Alex Navarro  
Charlotte Goode  
Wayland Whitney

### CELLO

David Rosen, *Acting Principal*  
Alicja Blanquart  
Judith Robinson  
Alana Shannon  
Melinda Mack  
Boris Nixon  
Emma Hill  
Constantine Janello

### BASS

Andy Butler, *Principal*  
Harry Dearman  
Keith Biondi  
Benjamin Green  
Sheldon Schlesinger

Nicholas Vegas

## FLUTE

Janette Erickson, *Principal*  
Pam Ellzey  
Colleen Fernandez

## OBOE

Rong Huey- Liu, *Principal*  
Cathy Del Russo

## CLARINET

Peter Nevin, *Principal*  
Lea Steffens

## BASSOON

Kris King, *Acting Principal*  
Katherine Oliver  
Wendy LaTouche

## HORN

Lauren Varley, *Acting Principal*  
Jennie Blomster  
Alex Camphouse  
Elisha Wells

## TRUMPET

Jonah Levy, *Acting Principal*  
Nathan Sobieralski

## TROMBONE

Phil Keen, *Acting Principal*  
Dillon MacIntyre  
Wayne Solomon

## TUBA

Rod Mathews, *Acting Principal*

## TIMPANI

Justin Gingrich, *Principal*

## PERCUSSION

Corey Ritter, *Principal*  
Tammy van der Paardt  
Craig Cory

## Chorus Roster

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Ken Aldag  
Margaret Arguelles  
Janet Baker  
Jeanne Behnke



KAREN  
SLACK

SARAH  
MESKO

ADAM  
DIEGEL

DAMIEN  
GETER

## Beethoven's Ninth

---

Sunday, June 11, 2023



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Linda Bennett  
Mary Benotti  
Roger Bergman  
Sarah Bernthal  
Christine Billingsley  
John Billingsley  
David Boyd  
Sarah Brickey  
Courtney Bridges  
Renata Briones  
Keith Brown  
Aaron Burdick  
Sherah Moore Burdick  
Darla Bussey  
Joe Camaquin-Vigil  
Gabriele Case  
Cheryl R. Chandler  
Joan Claassen  
Cameron Clarno  
Tom Colvin  
A. Daniel Comelli\*  
Mary Comelli  
Laverne Cottet  
Roxanne Cousins  
Jason Cruz  
Carol de Vries  
Celeste DeMonte  
Jim Doe  
David Dull  
Hyaesun Esler  
Chase Fernandez  
Valerie Fiala  
Jan Flanagan  
Ron Fletcher  
Jan Forbes  
Delores Friesen  
Carlos Gamboa  
Riley Garcia  
Chad Gifford  
Linda Gillis  
Jasmine Green  
Rachael Groeneweg



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Michael Gutierrez  
Matthew Haltom  
Pamela Heiman  
Ben Hensley  
David Hensley  
Tami Hensley  
Tom Holyoke  
Sheilagh Hughes Luna  
Holly Jamison  
Eloise Janzen  
Susan McQuirk Jensen  
Susan Juliusson  
Julie Kaiser  
Marion Karian  
Steve Lam  
Vivian Lam  
Morgan Lari  
Elizabeth Layous\*  
Jerry Lee  
Claire Leong  
Gina Leong  
Josh Leong  
Leslie Liles  
Tom Lindstrom  
Terry Long  
Juan Lucero  
Brian Lummis  
Gary Lynn  
Rod Lyon  
Rebecca Mabe  
Rachel MacAgy  
Sharon Matson  
Anne McGrath  
Katharine McGregor  
MaryLou McGuckin  
Deric McQueen  
Laura Mendes Moore  
Ramiro Merino  
Cheryl Montgomery  
John Montgomery  
Tony Mowrer\*  
Debbie Nagy\*



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Matthew Nannini-Hei

Kelly Nielsen

Richard Nielsen

Bob Olcott

Nick Olson

Robert Pankratz

Marianne Pansa

Jacob Pasalakis

Viktor Perez

Alan Peters

Carol Presley

John Presley

Jonathan Presley

Nancy Price

Floyd Quenzer

Laurita Rasmussen

Jean Raymond

Janyce Regier

David Reitzel

Reilly Rix

Sharon Robert

Kirsten Rocha

Terry Rommereim

Joan Rubinstein

Glady Ruiz

Ida Ruiz

Clare Ann Ruth-  
Heffelbower

Duane Ruth-Heffelbower

Christie Sartor

Nicole Saunders

Sabrina Schick

Ximena Schimpf

Scott Silveira

Chris Simmons

Theresa Souza

Joungmin Sur

Jasmine Swalef

Valerie Swalef

Linda Sward

Chanda Taylor

Cynthia Tilghman  
Valerie Uhrig  
Danny Valdez  
Gaonoucci Belle Vang  
Henry Vasquez  
Ernie Villalas  
Donald Yamakawa

*\*Section Leader*



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125

CHORAL TEXT & TRANSLATION

O Freunde, nicht diese Töne! Sondern Laßt uns angenehmere anstimmen, Und freudenvollere	O friends, not these sounds! Rather let us strike up more pleasant And more joyful ones.
Freude, schöner Götterfunken Tochter aus Elysium, Wir betreten feuertrunken, Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!	Joy, thou glorious spark of the gods, Daughter of Elysium, We approach fire-drunk, Heavenly One, your shrine.
Deine Zauber binden wieder Was die Mode streng geteilt; Alle Menschen werden Brüder, Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.	Your magic reunites That which custom strictly parts; All men become brothers, Where your gentle wing alights.
Deine Zauber binden wieder Was die Mode streng geteilt; Alle Menschen werden Brüder, Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.	Your magic reunites That which custom strictly parts; All men become brothers, Where your gentle wing alights.
Wem der große Wurf gelingen, Eines Freundes Freund zu sein; Wer ein holdes Weib errungen, Mische seinen Jubel ein!	Whoever succeeds in the great attempt To be a friend of a friend, Whoever has won a loving woman, Let him add his jubilation!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund! Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!	Yes, whoever calls even one soul His own on the earth's globe! And who never has, let him steal, Weeping, away from this group.
Freude trinken alle Wesen An den Brüsten der Natur; Alle Guten, alle Bösen Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.	All creatures drink joy At nature's breast; All the good, all the evil Follow in her roses' trail.



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GETER

Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023





## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Küsse gab sie uns und Reben, Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod; Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben, Und der Cherub steht vor Gott.	Kisses gave she us, and wine, A friend, faithful unto death; Even the worm was granted pleasure, And the cherub stands before God.
Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan, Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn, Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.	Glad, as his suns fly Through the Heavens' glorious plan, Run, brothers, your course, Joyous, like a hero to victory.
Freude, schöner Götterfunken Tochter aus Elysium, Wir betreten feuertrunken, Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!	Joy, thou glorious spark of the gods, Daughter of Elysium, We approach fire-drunk, Heavenly One, your shrine.
Deine Zauber binden wieder Was die Mode streng geteilt; Alle Menschen werden Brüder, Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt	Your magic reunites That which custom strictly parts; All men become brothers, Where your gentle wing alights.
Seid umschlungen, Millionen! Diesen Küß der ganzen Welt! Brüder - über'm Sternenzelt Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen	Be embraced, you millions! This kiss for the whole world! Brothers, beyond the star- canopy Must a loving Father dwell.
Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?	Do you bow down, you millions?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt? Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt! Über Sternen muss er wohnen.	Do you sense the Creator, world? Seek Him beyond the star-canopy! Beyond the stars must He dwell.
Seid umschlungen, Millionen! Diesen Küß der ganzen Welt!	Be embraced, ye millions! This kiss for the whole world!
Freude, schöner Götterfunken Tochter aus Elysium, Wir betreten feuertrunken, Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!	Joy, thou glorious spark of the gods, Daughter of Elysium, We approach fire-drunk, Heavenly One, your shrine.



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen? Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt? Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt! Über Sternen muss er wohnen	Do you bow down, you millions? Do you sense the Creator, world? Seek Him beyond the star-canopy! Beyond the stars must He dwell.
Tochter aus Elysium, Deine Zauber binden wieder Was die Mode streng geteilt; Alle Menschen werden Brüder, Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.	Daughter of Elysium, Your magic reunites That which custom strictly parts; All men become brothers, Where your gentle wing alights.
Seid umschlungen, Millionen! Diesen Küß der ganzen Welt! Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.	Be embraced, you millions! This kiss for the whole world! Brothers, beyond the star- canopy Must a loving Father dwell.
Seid umschlungen, Millionen! Diesen Küß der ganzen Welt!	Be embraced, you millions! This kiss for the whole world!
Freude, schöner Götterfunken Tochter aus Elysium, Freude, schöner Götterfunken	Joy, beautiful spark of the gods, Daughter of Elysium, Joy, beautiful spark of the gods

### Program Notes



**DAMIEN GETER (B. 1981)**

Symphony No. 1, The Justice Symphony | For Orchestra,  
chorus and Soprano solo

Damien Geter is an acclaimed composer who infuses classical music with various styles from the black diaspora to create music that furthers the cause for social justice, as well as a celebrated bass-baritone – “Possessed of a rolling, resonant voice even at the lowest register” (Northwest Reverb) – whose credits include performances from the operatic stage to the television screen.

Damien's growing body of compositions includes chamber, vocal, orchestral, and now full operatic works. His song cycle Cotton had its world premiere at Lyric Fest, and he had his motet performed by Emmanuel Music. He also conducted his own piece An African American Requiem at Fort Worth Opera and ABSENCE: Terence Blanchard with Portland Opera. Future commissions include premieres at Seattle Opera and Emmanuel Music, and World Premiere full operatic productions in 2024, 2025, and 2026 at Seattle Opera, Virginia Opera, InSeries Opera, and Portland Opera. Geter will also have subsequent premieres at Richmond Symphony, where he is the composer in residence through 2025.

Geter had six premieres as a composer in 2022: His large work, An African American Requiem, in partnership with Resonance Ensemble and the Oregon Symphony with subsequent performances at the Kennedy Center; I Said What I Said for Imani Winds, co-commissioned by Anima Mundi Productions, Chamber Music Northwest, and The Oregon Bach Festival; his one-act opera Holy Ground for Glimmerglass Opera; Elegy for the American Guild of Organists; The Bronze Legacy for Chicago Symphony Orchestra; and the chamber version of American Apollo for Des Moines Metro Opera.

Geter made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the Grammy award-winning production of Porgy and Bess as the Undertaker. This season, Mr. Geter's performance credits include Archibald Craven in The Secret Garden with Hawaii Opera Theatre, and concert credits entail Handel's Messiah with North Carolina Symphony as well as Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Fresno Philharmonic.

Last season, Geter performed the title role of Quamino in the World Premiere of Errollyn Wallen's Quamino's Map with Chicago Opera Theatre, as well as Angelotti in Tosca with Portland Opera, and Sam in Reno Symphony's Voices of a Nation: Trouble in Tahiti. In concert, Geter performed as the bass soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 for the Richmond Symphony, and in the role of William Still in Sanctuary Road with the Oakland Symphony.

Damien is an alum of the Austrian American Mozart Festival, as well as the Aspen Opera Center. He was a semifinalist for the Irma Cooper Vocal Competition. In 2012, he toured with the prestigious American Spiritual Ensemble, a group that helps to promote the preservation of the American art form - the spiritual.

Damien currently serves as the Artistic Advisor for Resonance Ensemble and Portland Opera, where he is also Music Director. He is the owner of [DG Music, Sans Fear Publishing](#). Music in Context: An Examination of Western European Music Through



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

a Sociopolitical Lens, the book he co-authored, is available on Amazon, or directly from the publisher, Kendall Hunt. Learn more about Damien at [www.damiengetermusic.com](http://www.damiengetermusic.com).



## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

### Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125

As slovenly as Beethoven was in his personal life, he stored and maintained his musical ideas in sketchbooks, continually jotting down ideas that might come in handy later on. Perusing these sketchbooks today, we gain insight into both his creative process and method of working. While Beethoven did not have the quick and ready inspiration of a Schubert or a Mendelssohn, two characteristics contributed to his greatness: he had the tenacity to work and rework his material many times, often over many years; and he knew when he got it right.

Ideas for the Ninth Symphony first appeared in Beethoven's sketchbook in 1817-18, initially as material for a pair of symphonies, one of which was to have a choral finale with a text from Greek mythology. He did not begin sustained work on the symphony until 1822, finally finishing it in February 1824.

During this period, Beethoven was embroiled in turmoil in his personal life. When his brother Johann, who had married a woman against the composer's advice, became ill, his wife Therese shamelessly carried on with her lover. Beethoven's on-again-off-again friendship with Anton Schindler, who eventually became his private secretary and first biographer, was currently off. It should be noted, however, that for all Beethoven's irascibility and mood swings, he was often a shrewd judge of character and he did not trust Schindler, who in the end made off with the composer's sketchbooks and conversation books, selling some and forging others.

Professionally, Beethoven was both clearly over his head in commitments and also beset by debts. He was putting the finishing touches for publication of the Missa Solemnis while trying to manipulate a secret bidding war for it among three publishers, each of whom were expecting the work. He used a bait-and-switch maneuver involving a Mass in D (that was never written), as an excuse to each publisher for not delivering the Missa Solemnis. He had also undertaken several other



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GETER

## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

commissions, some of which remained incomplete or never started.

One unfulfilled commission spurred the completion of the Ninth Symphony. Always an admirer of the British, Beethoven had sent inquiries to the Philharmonic Society of London and had received a positive reply with the promise of £50 for a new symphony. He would have liked to visit London, perhaps to experience the accolades showered on his former mentor, Franz Joseph Haydn, but the visit never materialized and the commission never fulfilled. It was, nevertheless, an incentive to finish the Symphony. The score was completed in February 1824, and Beethoven, disgusted with the musical taste of the Viennese, was planning to premiere the work in Berlin. But it had been ten years since he had given a public concert of his work in Vienna, and his friends and admirers signed a petition begging him not to disappoint his public any longer. Although he eventually gave in, it took three months of haggling with the Imperial “Pooh-Bahs” and reluctant singers to finally schedule the concert for May 7 at the Kärntnertortheater. Artistically the Symphony was a wild success but – because of the huge forces required and the large copying costs – a financial near-disaster.

Starting from the mysterious descending open intervals of the first movement, the symphony must have amazed its first hearers. Out of them gradually emerges the powerful first theme into classical sonata form. The contrasting second theme, like many of the composer's melodies, is made up of several distinct motives that he later develops separately. The movement ends in a long dramatic coda with an ominous ostinato in the cellos and basses.

The second movement is a massive scherzo that opens *Molto vivace* with hammer-blow descending octaves, an oblique reference to the descending intervals in the first movement. This motive is immediately picked up by the violins as the first bar of a fugue – an unusual but not unheard of structure for a scherzo. A driving ostinato rhythmic motif underlies the scherzo section, with the timpani periodically banging out the signature octaves and motivic rhythm. A playful trio brings respite, but the insistent scherzo returns with a short coda and a final hint at the trio.

The slow third movement is a free variation form comprised of the simultaneous transformation of two themes; its gentle intensity is in marked contrast to the powerful, driving music that preceded and will follow it. If anyone ever doubted that Beethoven was a Romantic, this movement will dispel the doubt, especially with the heartfelt second theme.



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

For a long time Beethoven had been unsure about what to do for the Finale. Material for a purely instrumental one ended up in 1825 as part of the string quartet Op. 132. Once he fixed on a choral finale, he had difficulties settling on its two main components: the melody and the text. The sketchbooks reveal that he had a surprisingly difficult time developing what ultimately became such a simple straightforward tune. In its first manifestation it appeared in a song, "Gegenliebe" (WoO 118) from 1794 and, in a closer version to the melody he ultimately settled on, as a main theme of the Choral Fantasia, Op. 80, of 1808.

It was not until November 1823, only three months before he finished the symphony, that Beethoven decided to use Friedrich Schiller's "An die Freude" (Ode to Joy). He had been toying with the idea of setting the Ode since 1793, when he considered it for a song. Again, in 1812, he incorporated part of it into a choral overture, a project he abandoned. Now, he took the opportunity to combine his desire and set the poem into the new choral symphony.

The long introduction to the Finale begins with a surprise, a recitative for the cellos and basses that, between recitative passages, recaps in order the first themes from the three preceding movements and anticipates a snatch of the chorale theme. But these recurrences serve as deliberate "false starts."

After the introduction by the full orchestra, Beethoven uses his own words for the repeat of the recitative, now sung by the baritone, to introduce Schiller's poem. In structure, the body of the Finale is a set of variations, one for each stanza of the poem plus a substantial coda. As poems go it's a bit over the top, and Schiller himself did not care for it. Beethoven's music, coupled with judicious rearrangement and strategic deletions in the text, transformed it into a cultural icon. At the climax of the movement, Beethoven abandons the variations for a lengthy dramatic coda in which the soloists and chorus restate the text of the poem and freely develop the musical material. However constrained in form the variations may have been, Beethoven handles the coda as an operatic finale, recalling the heady celebration that concluded his opera *Fidelio*.

Program notes by:  
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## Artist Biographies



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



**Rei Hotoda**

Conductor

Now entering her sixth season as Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic, conductor Rei Hotoda has been hailed as an inexhaustible dynamo with a deep commitment to reimagining the 21st century concert experience. Her vision can be seen through her thought-provoking programming, passionate allyship to marginalized artists, advocacy for arts education, and an unwavering commitment to presenting the music of our times.

Her success as the Music Director of the Fresno Philharmonic since 2017 has resulted in the extension of her tenure through the 2025 season. She has worked tirelessly to build first-time and unique connections with the Fresno community with an eye toward reaching different audiences with a new music concert series, *Proxima*, and special concerts at Bitwise South Stadium. She has reimagined the post-concert experience by creating the ever popular *Stay Tuned* series, and her programming continues to push through the preconceived notions of the classical concert-going experience, offering audiences works by often marginalized composers and today's leading voices in the field. Through her efforts, she has successfully broken down the barriers that often exist between artist and listener and reestablished the Fresno Philharmonic as a leader in the community it serves.

Rei has appeared as a guest conductor with many of today's leading ensembles, including the Symphony Orchestras of Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Detroit, Toronto, Winnipeg, Louisville, Hawaii and Utah as well as the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, among others. Her interpretations of such epic centerpieces of the classical canon such as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 and Britten's War Requiem, make her one of the most sought-after conductors of today. She is a tireless advocate for the music of our time, and most recently conducted the world premieres of Derek Bermel, John Wineglass, Kenneth Froelich, Cynthia Lee Wong, Kevin Day, Dinuk Wijeratne as well as works by seminal composers such as Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, Jessie Montgomery and Hawaiian composer, Michael-Thomas Foumai to much acclaim. As a champion of today's living composers and an artist that is dedicated to amplifying marginalized voices, Rei's innovative programming and interdisciplinary collaborations continue to position her as a leader in the industry.



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

Rei is also an active and critically acclaimed keyboardist and embraces her time conducting from the piano and harpsichord. One of her many recent highlights was leading the Fresno Philharmonic from the piano in Beethoven's monumental Triple Concerto as part of the orchestra's *Beethoven@250* celebration and from the harpsichord in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 as part of their Digital Masterworks series. In the 2021-22 season, she conducted both the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Fresno Philharmonic from the keyboard in Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos in E-flat major.

Rei is the proud recipient of several prestigious awards, including the 2006 Taki-Alsop Conducting Fellowship, created by Marin Alsop to mentor women conductors. Additionally, she has received a Peabody Career Development Grant, the Women's Philharmonic Scholarship, and an Illinois Arts Council International Arts Exchange Grant. Her teachers and mentors include Gustav Meier, Marin Alsop, Jaap van Zweden and Thierry Fischer.



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



**Karen Slack**

Soprano

Hailed for possessing a voice of extraordinary beauty, a seamless legato and great dramatic depth, American soprano Karen Slack has garnered international renown for her artistic versatility, charisma and entrepreneurial endeavors. A recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, Slack is known for her dynamic and passionate performances in both lead operatic roles and on the concert stage; as a sought-after collaborator, curator, and artistic advisor; and for her ground-breaking approach to engagement. She is an Artistic Advisor for Portland Opera, Co-Chair of the Women's Opera Network with Opera America, and serves on the board of the American Composer's Orchestra. In January 2022, Slack was appointed Creative Partner with Brooklyn's National Sawdust, opening with a solo recital and continuing through multiple programs throughout the season.

Highlights of Slack's 2022-2023 season include her debut with The Dallas Opera as Freia in *Das Rheingold*; the world premiere of Shawn Okpebholo's *Songs in Flight*, developed



by Sparks & Wiry Cries, alongside singer and multi-instrumentalist Rhiannon Giddens at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Kimmel Center; performances in Austin and Portland with the Miró Quartet, and in Cincinnati and Albany with the Pacifica Quartet; a recital in Fort Worth with pianist Michelle Cann and at Cal Poly Arts with organist Alan Morrison; performing as featured soloist with the Nashville Symphony and Oklahoma City Philharmonic in two different world premieres by Hannibal Lokumbe; Beethoven's Egmont at Carnegie Hall with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Fresno Philharmonic; and titled roles in productions at Portland Opera and Edmonton Opera. She also continues her roles as Artistic Advisor for Portland Opera and Co-Chair of the Women's Opera Network with Opera America.

Karen Slack has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, and San Francisco Opera in featured roles such as Alice Ford in Falstaff, Leonora in *Il trovatore*, Tosca with Arizona Opera, as Aïda at Austin Opera, Emelda Griffith in *Champion* with New Orleans Opera, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Nashville Opera, Violetta in *La Traviata* with Sacramento Opera and Sister Rose in *Dead Man Walking* with Minnesota, Atlanta, and Vancouver Opera. She made her Scottish Opera debut as Anna in Puccini's *Le villi*. Slack made her film debut portraying a featured role as the Opera Diva in Tyler Perry's movie and soundtrack *For Colored Girls*.



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



**Sarah Mesko**

Mezzo-Soprano

Praised by *The Washington Post* for her “consistently beautiful sound,” American mezzo-soprano Sarah Mesko is rapidly gaining attention for her “rich mezzo soprano” voice and musicality.

Highlights of her 21/22 season include returns to Houston Grand Opera and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis for the title role in *Carmen* as well as a return to the Metropolitan Opera in *Rodelinda* (Eduige). Recent engagements at the Metropolitan Opera include *Semiramide* (Arsace), *Carmen* (Mercédès), and covering the title role in *Agrippina*. Other recent engagements included *Carmen* (title role) with Tulsa Opera and her Canadian

debut in *Le comte Ory* (Isolier) with Edmonton Opera. On the concert stage she appeared in Handel's *Messiah* at the US Naval Academy and presented recitals at the University of Arkansas and Hendrix College.

In previous seasons, Ms. Mesko was seen at the Metropolitan Opera in *Die Zauberflöte* (Zweite Dame) and *Il trovatore* (Ines) while covering in *Cendrillon* (Le Prince Charmant). She also made her New York Philharmonic debut, her Cincinnati Opera debut in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Ottavia), and her house/role debut in *Little Women* (Jo) with Annapolis Opera.

Sarah made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in *The Magic Flute* (Second Lady) and appeared across the United States with The Metropolitan Opera Rising Stars concert tour. She made her role debut as Carmen with Washington National Opera in the Cafritz Young Artist performance; other performances at WNO include in *Hansel and Gretel* (Hansel), *Così fan tutte* (Dorabella), *Madama Butterfly* (Suzuki), and *The Magic Flute* (Second Lady). Ms. Mesko debuted at the Glimmerglass Festival in Vivaldi's *Catone in Utica* (Emilia) to great acclaim and made her debut at Houston Grand Opera in *A Little Night Music* (Mrs. Segstrom). She made her European debut in Paris in Lully's *Armide* (La Sage/ Sidonie) with Mercury Baroque and the Théâtre de Gennevilliers.

On the concert stage, Ms. Mesko has appeared with the National Symphony Orchestra under Tito Muñoz; in Handel's *Hercules* (Dejanira) with the Oregon Bach Festival; *Alexander Nevsky* with the Columbus Symphony; and with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra under Marin Alsop. Ms. Mesko has made recital appearances with the Dallas Opera at the Dallas Museum of Art; with tenor Paul Appleby for the George London Foundation at the Morgan Library in New York City; with the Dolce Suono Ensemble; with Vocal Arts DC, presenting Janáček's *Diary of One Who Disappeared* with tenor Toby Spence; and with San Francisco Opera Center's Schwabacher Debut Recital Series.

Sarah was a national finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, performing with the Met Orchestra under Patrick Summers. She has won First Prizes in various competitions, including the George London Foundation, the National Society of Arts and Letters, Annapolis Opera, Virginia Opera, Young Texas Artists, Sun Valley Opera, and the Franco-American Vocal Academy. She is also among a rare number of singers who have won the Richard F. Gold Career Grant twice; at Washington National Opera and Central City Opera.



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



**Adam Diegel**

Tenor

Korean American tenor Adam Diegel regularly earns international acclaim for his impassioned dramatic sensibilities, powerful voice, and for his classic leading man looks. From a performance as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at Glimmerglass Opera, *Opera News* raved: “The opera became a showdown between Adam Diegel’s impulsive, shaggily handsome Cavaradossi and Lester Lynch’s fearsome, animalistic Scarpia... (Diegel’s) spacious, Italianate tenor...delivered a stirring ‘Recondita armonia’ and built ‘E lucevan le stelle’ masterfully from hushed intimacy to an unfettered *cri de coeur*.”

This season Mr. Diegel will make his Boston Lyric Opera debut as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and will debut with Opera Columbus singing Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, as well as a gala concert with Knoxville Opera.

The 2020-2021 Adam Diegel returned to the Pensacola Opera for Don Jose in *Carmen* as well as making his role and company debut singing Manrico in *Il Trovatore* with Opera Tampa, as well as joining New York City Opera in their Bryant Park concert series and debuting with Victoria Hall Opera in their concert series.

For the 2019-2020 season Mr. Diegel returned to the Metropolitan Opera as Froh in *Das Rheingold*. He made a role debut singing Narraboth in *Salome* with the Atlanta Opera, the Tenor soloist in Mahler's *Lied von der Erde* with Park Ridge Civic Orchestra, debuted with Nashville Opera singing Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly* and returned to the Lithuanian National Opera for *Madame Butterfly*.

In the 2017-18 season, Diegel reprised his critically acclaimed role as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with Palm Beach Opera and returns to The Metropolitan Opera in *Norma* and *Madama Butterfly*. Additionally, Diegel performed two of his signature roles throughout the world as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at Opera Hong Kong and Palm Beach Opera and Don José in *Carmen* at San Francisco Opera, PORTopera, and Opera San Antonio. Additionally, Diegel sang the title role in Verdi’s *Don Carlo* with Lithuanian National Opera, Ruggiero in *La Rondine* with Opera Santa Barbara, Ismaele in *Nabucco* with The Metropolitan Opera, and the tenor solo in Verdi’s *Requiem* with Alabama Symphony Orchestra and Spokane Symphony.

## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



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Mr. Diegel made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Froh in Robert Lepage's landmark production of *Das Rheingold* conducted by Maestro James Levine, and later reprised the performance under Fabio Luisi. Further appearances at The Met include Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* under Plácido Domingo and Ismaele in *Nabucco* under Paolo Carignani. He will return to the famed house in 2019.

Other notable recent U.S. engagements include: Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at Atlanta Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Arizona Opera, Opera San Antonio, and Kentucky Opera; Ismaele in *Nabucco* at Opera Philadelphia; Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at Vancouver Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Seattle Opera, and Arizona Opera; Don José in *Carmen* at Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Florida Grand Opera, Arizona Opera, and Madison Opera; and Rodolfo in *La bohème* at Opera Omaha and Minnesota Opera.

Also in demand overseas, Diegel collects accolades from critics in Europe, Asia, and Australia. Of his performance in *Carmen* at English National Opera, *The Guardian* wrote: "The American Adam Diegel as José, tall and sturdy, looked the part of Carmen's latest love victim and conveyed perfectly the pent-up anger of a feckless man who – we know from the original *Merimée* novel, but not the libretto – has already committed a murder...Diegel rose to the challenges of Acts III and IV."

Other international appearances have included: Don José in *Carmen* in a new production at Opera Australia's Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour; Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with Lithuanian National Opera, The Savonlinna Opera Festival, and on tour in China at the Guangzhou Opera House in Anthony Minghella's acclaimed production; Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* at The National Theatre in Budapest, where he later performed Cavaradossi in *Tosca*; and David Alden's new production of *Luisa Miller* for Opéra National de Lyon.



**Damien Geter**

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Bass-Baritone, Composer

Damien Geter is an acclaimed composer who infuses classical music with various styles from the black diaspora to create music that furthers the cause for social justice, as well as a celebrated bass-baritone – "Possessed of a rolling, resonant voice even at the lowest register" (Northwest Reverb) – whose credits include performances from the operatic stage to the television screen.

## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



Damien's growing body of compositions includes chamber, vocal, orchestral, and now full operatic works. His song cycle Cotton had its world premiere at Lyric Fest, and he had his motet performed by Emmanuel Music. He also conducted his own piece An African American Requiem at Fort Worth Opera and ABSENCE: Terence Blanchard with Portland Opera. Future commissions include premieres at Seattle Opera and Emmanuel Music, and World Premiere full operatic productions in 2024, 2025, and 2026 at Seattle Opera, Virginia Opera, InSeries Opera, and Portland Opera. Geter will also have subsequent premieres at Richmond Symphony, where he is the composer in residence through 2025.

Geter had six premieres as a composer in 2022: His large work, An African American Requiem, in partnership with Resonance Ensemble and the Oregon Symphony with subsequent performances at the Kennedy Center; I Said What I Said for Imani Winds, co-commissioned by Anima Mundi Productions, Chamber Music Northwest, and The Oregon Bach Festival; his one-act opera Holy Ground for Glimmerglass Opera; Elegy for the American Guild of Organists; The Bronze Legacy for Chicago Symphony Orchestra; and the chamber version of American Apollo for Des Moines Metro Opera.

Geter made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the Grammy award-winning production of Porgy and Bess as the Undertaker. This season, Mr. Geter's performance credits include Archibald Craven in The Secret Garden with Hawaii Opera Theatre, and concert credits entail Handel's Messiah with North Carolina Symphony as well as Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Fresno Philharmonic.

Last season, Geter performed the title role of Quamino in the World Premiere of Errollyn Wallen's Quamino's Map with Chicago Opera Theatre, as well as Angelotti in Tosca with Portland Opera, and Sam in Reno Symphony's Voices of a Nation: Trouble in Tahiti. In concert, Geter performed as the bass soloist in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 for the Richmond Symphony, and in the role of William Still in Sanctuary Road with the Oakland Symphony.

Damien is an alum of the Austrian American Mozart Festival, as well as the Aspen Opera Center. He was a semifinalist for the Irma Cooper Vocal Competition. In 2012, he toured with the prestigious American Spiritual Ensemble, a group that helps to promote the preservation of the American art form - the spiritual.

Damien currently serves as the Artistic Advisor for Resonance Ensemble and Portland Opera, where he is also Music Director. He is the owner of [DG Music, Sans Fear Publishing](#). Music in Context: An Examination of Western European Music Through a Sociopolitical Lens, the book he co-authored, is available on Amazon, or directly from the publisher, Kendall Hunt. Learn



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



**Anna Hamre**

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Director, Fresno Master Chorale

Anna Hamre, Fresno State Professor Emerita, serves as Artistic Director of Fresno Community Chorus, Inc. where she conducts the Master Chorale, Coro Piccolo, and Coro Solare. While each ensemble mounts its own performances, the Master Chorale frequently collaborates with the Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra.

Dr. Hamre took over the Fresno Community Chorus in 2002. With the collaborative leadership of an active board, the large ensemble Master Chorale has become the premier symphonic chorus in the Fresno area. In recent years, multiple performances of the Master Chorale have been included by Donald Munro in "Top Cultural Arts Events" in the Fresno area. The chamber ensemble Coro Piccolo, most noted for its holiday performances at St. Anne's Chapel, presented the Fresno premiere of Ron Kean's *The Journey of Harriet Tubman* in March 2019. In 2016 FCC, Inc. added to its organization a new classical choir, Coro Solare, which is designed to rehearse and perform only during daylight hours. The treble-voice ensemble Coro Vox Aeterna was created for the recording of *Mother of Light*, the CD featuring international star Isabel Bayrakdarian. It was nominated for a 2018 JUNO (Canadian Grammy) Award. The mixed-voice ensemble Fresno Coro Vox Aeterna is performing with Bayrakdarian this season in Fresno, Burbank, and San Francisco.

Dr. Hamre has accumulated an extensive list of guest engagements as a conductor, adjudicator, clinician, and presenter, including two Carnegie Hall appearances conducting on the MidAmerica series. She has presented various choral-conducting and music-education sessions at the local, state, and national levels. Her articles have appeared in state and regional music magazines, plus the *International Choral Bulletin*, *The Choral Journal*, and *Spotlight on Teaching Chorus*. Her extensive experience conducting choirs in school, church, and community settings has given her the opportunity to conduct numerous new works such as Jounghmin Sur's "Like Streams We Gather," Anna DeFoe's "A God and Yet a Man," Bradley Nelson's "This Central Garden," and the American



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## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023

premiere of Philip Wilby's reconstruction of Mozart's *Mass in C*. She has performed with her groups in Mexico, China, Italy, Austria, England, Greece, France, Spain, and Poland.

Dr. Hamre is the author of *The High-School/University Sight-Singer* (Masterworks Press), a music literacy method in use in every state plus the District of Columbia, Guam, British Columbia, Hong Kong, and Indonesia. *The Weekly Sight-Singer: An Abbreviated and Accelerated Method*, was released in 2011.

Dr. Hamre holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in vocal and instrumental music education from Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD, where she was inducted into their Performing and Visual Arts Hall of Fame in 2017. She earned a Master of Music degree in choral music from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral literature and performance from the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Recent honors include the Fresno Arts Council Horizon Artist Award (2007), the California Association for Music Education (CMEA) President's Award (2013), the CMEA Choral Conductor Award (2006), the CMEA Central Section College/University Music Educator Award (2006), Fresno County Office of Education Roy Klassen Award for Excellence in Choral Music Education (2015), the Fresno State College of Arts and Humanities Excellence in Teaching Award (2003), the Fresno-Madera Counties Music Education Association Choral Educator Award (2003), and recognition from Fresno State music fraternities.

After holding numerous positions on local, state, and national boards, Dr. Hamre currently serves as Past President of the American Choral Directors Association, Western Region. She is a member of the Community Advisory Council for Valley Public Radio in Fresno.



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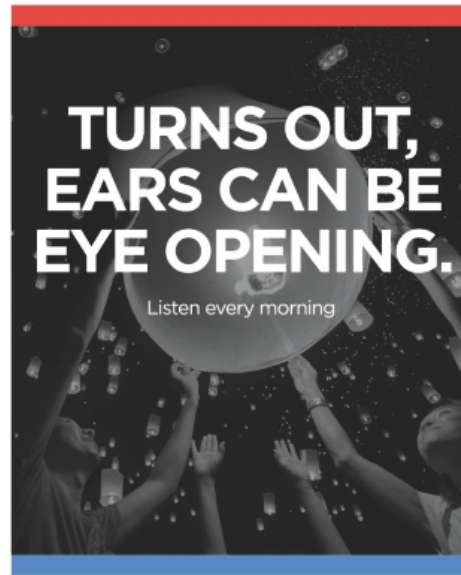
## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



## Beethoven's Ninth

Sunday, June 11, 2023



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