NATS 59th NATIONAL CONFERENCE MINI-RECITALS

— Schedule Subject to Change —

SUNDAY, JULY 5

10:30 a.m. **Longhorn Music Theater Workshop Showcase**
Presented by Mikhail Smigelski, Leah Crocetto, and James Maverick

In 2023, my colleagues at the University of Texas Butler School of Music — Leah Crocetto, James Maverick, and I — founded a Musical Theatre Workshop for undergraduate voice and choral studies students. What began as a few rehearsals and a small classroom showcase has grown into an annual two-month intensive, culminating in a two-hour Musical Revue with a live band and a cast of 25 singers. In our predominantly classical vocal performance-oriented program, student interest has been remarkable. Even non-vocal and non-music majors audition enthusiastically, drawn by the creative challenge and collaborative spirit. Today's singers and teachers must be versatile: even those focused on classical genres need familiarity with Musical Theatre styles and performance practices. In this recital, we present a snapshot of our work, highlighting how our students explore and integrate diverse styles within the Musical Theatre realm.

11 a.m. **Becoming: Fully Out, Fully Me**
Presented by Nicholas Klein

This recital of contemporary musical theatre features Dr. Nick Klein and friends in a program that highlights the variety of sounds, stories, and styles represented in today's repertoire. The selections span introspective ballads and energetic ensemble moments, offering a snapshot of modern musical theatre composition while emphasizing narrative depth and emotional range. A central focus of the program is the amplification of stories from marginalized communities, including LGBTQIA+ individuals, women, and more. These works honor lived experiences that have historically been underrepresented on stage, inviting space for visibility, authenticity, and connection through music. Drawing from influences such as pop, rock, jazz, and traditional Broadway writing, the repertoire reflects both the evolution of the genre and its power as a platform for expression and advocacy. This recital centers on artistry, inclusivity, and collaboration, underscoring contemporary musical theatre's relevance in both performance and academic contexts.

1 p.m. **Voices of Legacy: A Celebration of African American Art Song**
Presented by Darryl Taylor and Casey Robards

This recital highlights the rich legacy of African American art song through the works of H. Leslie Adams, Robert Owens, and Dave Ragland — three of the genre's most vital and compelling voices. Curated and performed by Dr. Darryl Taylor, a leading advocate for African American art song and founder of the African American Art

Song Alliance (http://artsongalliance.org), the program draws from decades of scholarship, performance, and recordings, including extensive releases on Albany Records. Each song will be contextualized with brief commentary, offering insights into the composers' lives, musical language, and cultural significance. Dr. Taylor has shared this repertoire widely through national and international lectures and performances over the past 30+ years. He is joined by collaborative pianist and conductor Casey Robards, whose artistry and sensitivity bring these powerful works to life. This program offers a moving exploration of artistry, identity, and the enduring voice of African American composers.

1:30 p.m. **Living Voices: Stories of South Africa**
Presented by Christiaan Bester, Kerry Deal, Bronwen Forbay, Sam Martin, and Ellen Rissinger

As the political and artistic landscape continues to evolve in post-Apartheid South Africa, new voices have emerged in the country's art song repertoire. This lecture recital presents a cross-section of South Africa's contemporary art song, featuring living composers from the country's diverse cultural backgrounds: Afrikaans and English speaking composers, women, and black South African composers. With texts and poetry coming from several of South Africa's eleven official languages, the songs address topics including the beauty of South Africa, the struggle for racial equality, loss and longing, exile, and gender-based violence. This session features works for soprano and baritone by Hendrik Hofmeyr, Niel van der Watt, Juliet Wootton, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, Sibusiso Njeza, and Bongani Ndodana-Breen. With the aim of illuminating these songs to expand global art song repertoire and provide voice teachers with accessible, meaningful repertoire that reflects underrepresented viewpoints, the recital also features discussion of the composers' compositional influences and the meaning of poetry chosen to portray stories of the South African people.

2 p.m. **Diving into Duets: MT Edition**
Presented by André Chiang, Olivia Yokers, and Valerie Trujillo

This mini recital will take the audience on a journey through some of the most loved and underserved duets in American musical theatre. The performers have broad expertise in performing musical theatre regionally as well as teaching it at their institutions. The selected duets will move between the different ages of musical theatre and provide examples of what is possible in a programmatic theme. By "diving into duets" for baritenor and soprano, we hope to entertain the audience and inform them of the scope of musical theatre.

2:30 p.m. **December Songs: Songs of Love and Loss**
Presented by Becky Walker and Geoffrey Waite

"December Songs" is a song cycle for singer and pianist by musical theatre composer-lyricist Maury Yeston. The work is a "retelling" of Franz Schubert's "Winterreise" with a cabaret sensibility. The songs in both December Songs and Winterreise are linked as a sequence of reflections by a woman taking a lonely walk in winter, thinking back on her lost love. The cycle walks through many emotions that mirror the stages of grief: sadness, anger, hopelessness, joy, etc. but ultimately ends in acceptance. The cycle includes ten songs to be sung without interruption, but here, I have chosen 4. "December Snow" describes the initial walk in the snow realizing that she is alone now. "Please Let's Not Even Say Hello" is a realization that to even speak to her love will evoke too many difficult emotions. "I Had a Dream About You" is a playful recollection of happy times, recalling their frequent car rides and observing nature together. "What a Relief" is the final acceptance stage, that now she needs to move on with her life and live to the fullest without him. It contains musical reprisals from a few of the other songs, so it reflects closure both musically and emotionally.

3 p.m. **Valencian Voices: Matilde Salvador's Art Songs for Voice and Guitar**
Presented by Elisa Ramon and Alessio Olivieri

Spanish composer and painter Matilde Salvador i Segarra (1918–2007) was a prominent figure in Valencian culture, deeply committed to her heritage and language. Known for her contributions to 20th-century Spanish music, Salvador combined traditional Valencian musical elements with a contemporary harmonic language reminiscent of the late Manuel de Falla. Her vocal compositions, often set to texts by Catalonian and Valencian poets, showcase her melodic inspiration and cultural depth. Salvador's works for voice and guitar offer singers and guitarists the opportunity to explore the textures of Spanish poetry and music. This lecture-recital introduces her art songs as repertoire suitable for various levels of vocal technique. Often within an accessible vocal range, these pieces support emerging singers in developing their skills while engaging with lesser-known Spanish art music. Through analysis and performance, this presentation aims to highlight Salvador's compositional style and her contributions to Spanish art song, offering valuable repertoire additions to undergraduate and graduate voice programs.

3:30 p.m. **Look Twice, a new song cycle by Juliana Hall and Antigoni Gaitana**
Presented by Ivy Walz and Donna Loewy

Look Twice (2023), by composer Juliana Hall and poet Antigoni Gaitana powerfully bridges cultures and generations, revealing the deep human struggles behind oppression. Through evocative songs spanning time and place, it ignites hope and compassion — using art song as a catalyst to open hearts and minds to stories that demand to be heard. Gumyōchō tells the tale of a creature in Buddhist mythology, a parable for the interdependence of all humans on one another. Zaitun describes the backdrop of natural beauty against burning orchards. Apartheid is a play on the word and its inherent division. It sounds a call to "see yourself in others." Grandma Aeonia's Lullaby seeks to comfort through terror as it states: "Do not forget, do not hate, God decides our fate." The final song, Look Twice delivers a powerful message from ancestors, both Native American and African American, "If there is no me there is no you".

Monday, July 6

11 a.m. **"And" is Rather Beautiful: An Exploration of Cross Training through Modern American Composers**
Presented by Michaela Kelly and Amelia Hammond

In this mini recital, classical voice repertoire and musical theater standards collide. The program reflects flexibility, and an array of vocal options that showcase the value of cross training. This recital is entirely in the English language, spanning from Stephen Schwartz, Stephen Sondheim, John Musto, to Eric Whitacre. This performance will highlight the importance of collaboration as the versatility of both singer and pianist is paramount. This recital aims to underline the importance of "and" rather than "or" when it comes to programming, voice training, and voice teaching.

11:30 a.m. **From Opera to the Opry**
Presented by J. Adam Shelton

From Opera to the Opry is the country buffet of J. Adam Shelton's career. Perhaps you've wondered why he is the way that he is, and this will explain it! By the time you leave, you'll have sampled his operatic career, early country influences, and even a few Shelton originals that'll tug on your heartstrings from his upcoming album Horse Thieves and Carny Folk.

2 p.m. **Freylekh: A "joyful" rediscovery of De Cormier's Yiddish folksongs**

Presented by Kimberly Lazzeri, William Herzog, and Christina Lalog Seal

This recital features songs for voice, violin, and piano from the newly-released album, Freylekh: A "joyful" rediscovery of De Cormier's Yiddish folksongs. These songs are selections from the recently published The Yiddish Folksong Project Anthology: The arrangements of Robert De Cormier. The anthology brings to light this American composer's folksong arrangements, which had previously been kept in a storage closet for over 40 years. Not only is this anthology the first-ever publication of De Cormier's arrangements of Yiddish folksongs, but it is also the first-ever large body of Yiddish folksong repertoire that is arranged in the classical style for performance on the concert or recital stage. It is the presenters' hope to not only inspire performances of these Yiddish folksongs, but to also inspire singers to perform repertoire that speaks to their own cultural identities. To listen to the album and view videos, please visit www.kimberlylazzeri.com.

2:30 p.m. **Reacting to the Landscape: Music by Women Composers for Soprano and Clarinet**
Presented by Whistling Hens (Jennifer Piazza-Pick and Natalie Groom)

When considering vocal chamber music, many singers prefer combinations that include piano; however, performing as a duo with another solo instrument without piano provides a different and more intimate soundscape. In this recital, Whistling Hens will perform a program centered on the unique pairing of soprano and clarinet, focusing on works by living women composers. Showcasing a world premiere piece by Jenni Brandon and repertoire by Jennifer Stevenson, the recital explores the rich sonic and emotional possibilities of this duo. Each work highlights the Hen's dynamic interplay, from rhythmic vitality to moments of stillness and subtle color. Emphasizing clarity, nuance, and expressive innovation, this program offers a fresh perspective on vocal chamber music, presenting the soprano and clarinet as equal partners in musical storytelling. This repertoire invites audiences into a vibrant and evolving sound world where words, melody, and breath converge in powerful and unexpected ways.

3 p.m. **Sounding the Mosaic: Contemporary Chamber Music for Voice and Trumpet by Women Composers**
Presented by Susan Hochmiller, Steven Marx, and Scott Crowne

This mini-recital will feature contemporary chamber music for trumpet and voice by women composers including Lori Laitman, Francine Trester, Barbara Harbach, Heather Gilligan, Amy Dunker, and Lauren Bernofsky. Ranging in stylistic and technical demand, these works offer updated programming possibilities for this instrumentation, and enhanced pedagogical and professional benefits for performers. Attendees will leave this session with increased knowledge of vocal chamber repertoire for voice and trumpet by women composers, fostering inclusivity, equity, and diversity in programming, pedagogical application, and a resource guide with additional repertoire recommendations.

3:30 p.m. **My Spirituals: The Life, Legacy, and Music of Eva Jessye**
Presented by Damon Dandridge and Ramelle Brooks

Join us for a powerful lecture recital exploring *My Spirituals*, the groundbreaking 1927 anthology by Eva Jessye — trailblazing conductor, educator, and the first Black woman to achieve international acclaim as a professional choral director. This session offers a rare look into Jessye's personal and musical world, where spirituals are more than repertoire — they are lived memory, cultural witness, and artistic testimony. Dr. Damon H. Dandridge will present historical and biographical insights into Jessye's life and the significance of her work in shaping the concert tradition of African American spirituals. Bass, Dr. Ramelle Brooks will bring selected pieces from "My Spirituals" to life, revealing the emotional and spiritual depth embedded in each song. Attendees will gain a richer understanding of Jessye's role in preserving and elevating African-American sacred

music, and how "My Spirituals" continues to resonate across generations. Don’t miss this celebration of voice, history, and heritage.

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