SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2019
AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY’S CENTER FOR THE ARTS
FEATURES
AUDRA MCDONALD
L.A. THEATRE WORKS: SEVEN
VIRGINIA OPERA’S TOSCA
KEYBOARD CONVERSATIONS® WITH JEFFREY SIEGEL
LADAMA
THE FOUR ITALIAN TENORS
PETER RABBIT ™ TALES
CIRQUE MEI
AND OTHER PROGRAMMING FOR THE COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

(FAIRFAX, VA)— The Center for the Arts at George Mason University kicks off the 2019/20 season this September and October with an array of dance, theater, opera, and music from around the world through programs from Great Performances at Mason, the Family Series, as well as signature events from Mason’s College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Download High-resolution images: Center for the Arts Press Gallery

For press inquiries, multimedia assistance, and ticket requests, e-mail kfranko@gmu.edu.

The Center for the Arts opens the season with the return of beloved musician and story-teller Jeffrey Siegel on September 22 with the first of his Keyboard Conversations® series, Music of Mozart and Haydn. Tony, Grammy®, and Emmy® Award winner Audra McDonald makes her Center for the Arts debut in a one-night-only performance, as part of the ARTS by George! benefit September 28. The annual fundraising event garners support for College of Visual and Performing Arts’ student scholarships and the Great Performances at Mason series.

LADAMA, a powerhouse quartet hailing from Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and the U.S. will end a weeklong residency in Fairfax with their Concert Hall performance October 4. Known for pioneering a new dynamic sound, LADAMA is the first of three artists this season to launch the inaugural Mason Artists-in-Residence program, which is designed to broaden the reach and deepen the impact of the Center’s artistic programming.
The following weekend, audiences will be immersed in Italy’s rich culture and vocal music with The Four Italian Tenors Saturday, October 5 before the weekend wraps up with the return of the Family Series featuring two performances of Peter Rabbit™ Tales Sunday, October 6.

Virginia Opera returns to the Center for its 45th season with Puccini’s most acclaimed and performed works Tosca, directed by Lillian Groag and conducted by the company’s Artistic Director Andrew Turner, October 12 and 13. The month continues with L.A. Theatre Works’ SEVEN, October 18. The play—a collaboration with D.C.-based non-profit Vital Voices and performed in L.A. Theatre Works’ staged-reading style—features the true stories of seven women from around the globe, who bravely fought for real and lasting change in their communities. The same weekend, Chinese acrobats Cirque Mei return to the Center to demonstrate amazing feats of agility, strength and poise, in two performances October 19. Jeffrey Siegel brings the jam-packed month of events to a close with his second Keyboard Conversations® series, Mistresses and Masterpieces, featuring the works of Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, and Bartók.

A full schedule of performances for September and October 2019 is below. Unless otherwise noted, performances will take place in the Center for the Arts Concert Hall located at 4373 Mason Pond Drive in Fairfax, VA. Tickets are available for purchase in person at the Center for the Arts’ Ticket Office (open Tuesday–Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.), by calling 703-993-2787, or through the Center for the Arts’ website.

The Great Performances at Mason Series brings some of the finest artists from around the country and the world to the Center for the Arts Concert Hall in Northern Virginia:

Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel
Humor and Heartache—Music of Mozart and Haydn
Sunday, September 22 at 7 p.m.

Become a classical music insider with virtuoso pianist Jeffrey Siegel. Popular with classical music lovers and newcomers alike, his unique “concerts with commentary” format gives the story behind the music. This concert explores the wide range of emotions the music of these two great composers express: deep anguish and sadness to irresistible charm, wit, and joy. Siegel opens the season with a program that includes Haydn’s exuberant Gypsy Rondo and melancholy Variations in F minor as well as Mozart’s passionate Piano Sonata No. 8 in A minor. Jeffrey Siegel is “one of those few pianists who impresses first as interpreter. A first-class musician who can sketch and colour with greatness” (The London Times). An interactive Question and Answer session will conclude this program.
An Evening with Audra McDonald
Songs from the American Music Theater
Saturday, September 28 at 8:30 p.m.
$100, $75, $50

Tony, Grammy®, and Emmy® Award winner Audra McDonald makes her Center for the Arts debut. In this concert, McDonald performs her trademark mix of hits from Broadway and the Great American Songbook. In addition to a record-breaking six Tony Awards—distinguishing her as the most decorated performer in American theater—she is the recipient of two Grammy® Awards, an Emmy® Award, and a 2015 National Medal of Arts bestowed on her by President Barack Obama. Tony-winning performances include Carousel, Master Class, Ragtime, A Raisin in the Sun, The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess, and Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar & Grill. Blessed with a luminous soprano voice and an incomparable gift for dramatic truth-telling, she is as much at home on Broadway and concert stages as she is on film and television. As a recording artist, she has released six solo albums. Her training in classical voice at Juilliard has led to appearances with leading opera companies and orchestras around the world. For this one-night-only ARTS by George! benefit, McDonald will be joined onstage by Andy Einhorn on piano, Michael Kuennen on bass, and Gene Lewin on drums.

Mason Artist-in-Residence
LADAMA
Friday, October 4 at 8 p.m.
$25

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with an extraordinary performance by the “Female Latin Powerhouse group LADAMA” (LA Weekly). This fresh and vibrant quartet innovates “Latin Alternative” music, seamlessly shifting instrumentation between bandola llanera (a mandolin relative), guitar, voice, and various percussion instruments. Each of these talented women, Lara Klaus, Daniela Serna, Mafer Bandola, and Sara Lucas, are musical and social trailblazers, hailing from across the Americas—Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and the United States. Their unique and energetic sound is not easily categorized: it effortlessly glides from electric to acoustic, from Spanish to English to Portuguese, and blends South American and Caribbean styles such as cumbia, coco, maracatu, onda nueva and joropo with soul, R&B, and pop. “The result is a vivid montage of music of the Americas with irresistible spirit and universal appeal,” (NPR).

The Four Italian Tenors
Viva Italia!
Saturday, October 5 at 8 p.m.
$55, $47, $33

Be transported to bella Italia and indulge in Italy’s rich culture and vocal music with The Four Italian Tenors in their U.S. debut tour Viva Italia! Hear a new generation of world-class tenors entertain with panache singing familiar classics and arias like Donizetti’s “Una furtiva lagrima” from L’Elisir d’Amore; Puccini’s “Che gelida manina” from La Boheme and “Nessun Dorma” from Turandot. The evening wouldn’t be complete, of course, without “Caruso” and “That’s Amore.” Don’t miss this charming quartet of four great tenor talents in an evening of classic Italian wit, dramatic flair, and music you know and love.
**Virginia Opera**  
*Tosca*  
Saturday, October 12 at 8 p.m.  
Sunday, October 13 at 2 p.m.  
$110, $70, $40

Virginia Opera opens its 45th season with one of Giacomo Puccini’s most acclaimed and performed works, *Tosca*. This tour-de-force opera features some of Puccini’s best-known lyrical arias, including “Vissi d’Arte” and “E lucevan le stelle.” Set in Rome on the brink of military invasion, this gripping story of romance, jealousy, intrigue, and murder follows a trio of tragic figures—a heroic painter, Cavaradossi; his jealous lover, Tosca; and a sadistic Police Chief, Scarpia, who sets the plot in motion by arresting Cavaradossi. The action is taut and lethal, spanning less than a single day, during which time no one—neither hero or villain—survives to the end. Lillian Groag directs a stellar cast (Ewa Płonka as Floria Tosca, Matthew Vickers as Mario Cavaradossi, and Kyle Albertson as Baron Scarpia) in this production that surges with timeless passion, unforgettable characters, and an emotional musical score that will leave you breathless. Sung in Italian with English supertitles.

**L.A. Theatre Works**  
Susan Albert Loewenberg, Producing Director Presents  
*SEVEN*  
By Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol K. Mack, Ruth Margraff, Anna Deavere Smith and Susan Yankowitz  
Friday, October 18 at 8 p.m.  
$44, $37, $26

*SEVEN* is a powerful theatrical experience that tells the true stories of seven women from around the globe, who bravely fought to create real and lasting change in their communities. These courageous women from Pakistan, Nigeria, Ireland, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Russia, and Cambodia faced life-threatening obstacles to bring about major improvements in the lives of women and girls in their home countries. Seven acclaimed playwrights — Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol K. Mack, Ruth Margraff, Anna Deavere Smith, and Susan Yankowitz — collaborated to weave together a tapestry of poignant stories relaying the struggle, threats, and violence along the road to triumph. The documentary play, created with the support of the D.C.-based non-profit Vital Voices Global Partnership, has been translated into 27 languages and performed worldwide in more than 30 countries. “SEVEN emphasizes the truth that the dignity and rights of women are essential to every culture around the globe” *(AudioFile Magazine)*.

**Cirque Mei**  
Elite Circus Artists and Acrobats from the Hebei Province, China  
Saturday, October 19 at 2 p.m. & 8 p.m.  

Direct from the People’s Republic of China, this ensemble of elite circus performers thrills the young and old alike with their amazing feats of agility, strength, and poise. The spectacular performances are a colorful and lively celebration of the Chinese circus arts, which are famous throughout the world. Cirque Mei blends ancient artistry with breathtaking energy for a non-stop extravaganza of acrobatics, contortion tricks, juggling acts, and balancing feats. This remarkable company features 40 leading circus artists and acrobats from the northern Hebei Province who execute many of the most
popular Chinese circus routines, including hoops diving, lion dance, collective bicycle skills, flying meteors, foot juggling with umbrellas, and more. Bring the whole family to experience the beauty, wonder, and excitement of Cirque Mei.

**Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel**

*Mistresses and Masterpieces*

Sunday, October 20 at 7 p.m.


Enjoy music inspired by the “significant others” in the lives of Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, and Bartók. For his second concert of the season, Jeffrey Siegel plays compositions that would not be what they are without the romantic inspiration of certain women in the composers’ lives. Perfect for classical music lovers and newcomers alike, Siegel gives the back story about the piece and composer he is about to perform. “An unusual gift for commentary as well as extraordinary pianism bring Siegel’s audience wholly into the musical experience” *(Los Angeles Times)*. An interactive Question and Answer session will conclude this program.

**The Center for the Arts’ Family Series** presents performances designed to introduce young audiences to the arts through lively and engaging programs in song, dance, and story:

**Enchantment Theatre Company**

*Peter Rabbit™ Tales*

Book Adapted by Jennifer Blatchley Smith, Leslie Reidel and Landis Smith

Music by Charles Gilbert

Based on The Original Peter Rabbit Books™ by Beatrix Potter

By arrangement with Frederick Warne & Co Limited, A Penguin Books Limited company

Sunday, October 6 at 1 p.m.

Sunday, October 6 at 4 p.m.

$15 for Adults/$10 Children. Family-friendly.

Recommended for ages 3 to 9

“Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were—Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail and Peter.” For more than 100 years, Beatrix Potter’s famous opening line to *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* has captivated generations of children, introducing them to a mischievous, little blue-coated rabbit and his escapades in Mr. McGregor’s garden. Experience this beloved classic all over again with your little bunnies in Enchantment Theatre Company’s delightful theatrical adaptation of *Peter Rabbit™ Tales*. All of the colorful whimsy and wisdom of the original stories will come alive on stage with the help of unforgettable characters, fantastical masks, playful puppets, gorgeous sets, and original music. “Everything about this world-class production is inventive and endearing; it fully captures the spirit of the beloved stories, the essence of childhood, and the imagination of the audience, both young and old” *(Phindie.com)*.

**Mason Student and Faculty Performances & Events**

*Mason School of Music*

**Grand Piano Celebration: All Steinway School**

*Linda Apple Monson & Friends*

Concert Hall
Sept. 22 at 3 p.m.
$20 Adult, $15 Senior, $5 Youth through Grade 12

Get ready for a fantastic afternoon of piano music during Mason’s own “All-Steinway” event. Dr. Linda Apple Monson, International Steinway Artist, and colleagues will perform as well as gifted student artists in a dazzling display of exciting piano repertoire. Make a day of classical music by attending this concert before Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel later that same evening.

ARTS By George!
Saturday, Sept. 28 at 5:00 p.m.
$125 Mason Alumni, $300 Individual, Sponsorships available

Join us for a benefit in support of student scholarships at George Mason University’s College of Visual and Performing Arts, Mason Community Arts Academy, Green Machine Ensembles, and the Great Performances at Mason season at the Center for the Arts. The evening begins by showcasing the remarkable talents of Mason students amid an array of spectacular food and beverages, and culminates in the Concert Hall where Tony, Grammy®, and Emmy® Award winner Audra McDonald performs her trademark mix of hits from Broadway and the Great American Songbook. Her record-breaking six Tony Awards distinguish her as the most decorated performer in American theater, but she is as much at home on Broadway as she is on film and television, as an acclaimed recording artist, and with appearances with leading opera companies and orchestras around the world.

Mason School of Music
Mason Symphonic Band & Percussion Concert
Concert Hall
Wednesday, October 2 at 8 p.m.
$12 Adult, $8 Senior, $5 Youth through Grade 12

The Mason Symphonic Band under the vibrant musical leadership of Profs. John Kilkenny and Denny Stokes, provides music majors and increasingly growing numbers of non-music majors an opportunity to study and perform a wide variety of traditional and contemporary wind band literature. The Mason Percussion Ensemble, led by Professor John Kilkenny and Matthew Halligan, presents works that include a variety of percussion instruments.

Mason School of Music
Mason Wind Symphony with the Fairfax Wind Symphony Orchestra
Concert Hall
Tuesday, October 8 at 8 p.m.
$12 Adult, $8 Senior, $5 Youth through Grade 12

The George Mason University Wind Symphony, led by composer-conductor Mark Camphouse is a select ensemble comprised of outstanding wind, brass, and percussion players in the School of Music and the University. The ensemble’s mission is to study and perform the best literature available for wind band, while emphasizing soloistic and orchestral performance practice. The Wind Symphony ranks among the finest collegiate wind bands in the Commonwealth and performs the best of new band literature. Programs include world premieres of student and faculty compositions, student and faculty soloists, and more traditional repertoire.
Mason School of Music
Mason Symphony Orchestra
Concert Hall
Wednesday, October 16 at 8 p.m.
$12 Adult, $8 Senior, $5 Youth through Grade 12

Under the direction of Dr. Dennis Layendecker, the Mason Symphony Orchestra is comprised of outstanding string, wind, and percussion players from throughout the School of Music.

Mason School of Music
Faculty Artist Showcase Recital
Concert Hall
Sunday, October 13 at 3 p.m.

Annual showcase recital of performances by Mason's stellar School of Music faculty including vocal, instrumental, and piano artists. This event occurs in conjunction with Alumni Weekend.

Mason School of Music
Fall Choral Invitational
Concert Hall
Sunday, October 20 at 3 p.m.
$12 Adult, $8 Senior, $5 Youth through Grade 12

A select choral ensemble at George Mason University under the direction of Dr. Stan Engebretson, the University Singers are dedicated to the performance of advanced vocal chamber music ranging from Renaissance to contemporary and commissioned works. The University Chorale, under the direction of Dr. Lisa Billingham, is a choir of 80-100 singers, performs a wide variety of music each semester ranging from classical styles to multi-cultural works and popular music.

Mason School of Theater
Rags
Book by Joseph Stein (with revisions by David Thompson)
Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz
Music by Charles Strouse
Directed by Rick Davis
Musical Direction by Joe Walsh
Concert Hall
Thursday, October 31 at 8 p.m.
Friday, November 1 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, November 2 at 2 p.m.
Saturday, November 2 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, November 3 at 4 p.m.
$30 Adult, $15 Students, Staff, Seniors and Groups

Composed by the creators of Wicked, Godspell, Annie, Bye Bye Birdie and other American classics, Rags is a heart-warming and powerful tale showcasing the grit and optimism of immigrants arriving in Ellis Island at the turn of the 20th century. Mason’s School of Theater has a rare opportunity to work with the award-winning creative team on this new adaptation of a hidden musical gem. Be among the first to
hear *Rags*’ newly revised libretto in this D.C.-area premiere, and take in the ravishing score and sweeping saga of American’s immigrant past blending with new American values.

*Mason School of Art*

**Visual Voices**
Harris Theater
Select Thursdays 7:30 to 9 p.m. |
**September 9** – Buzz Spector  
**September 26** – Tom Ashcraft  
**October 10** – Kristine Portter  
**October 24** – Daniel Wickerham & Malcolm Lomax

Visual Voices, a professional lecture series sponsored by the School of Art, invites eight nationally recognized visiting artists and designers to speak about their work and the world of art and design. In addition to providing a look inside the studios of these top professionals, the series offers students the opportunity to interact with them during daytime seminars and studio visits.

**Other Programming at the Center for the Arts and the College of Visual and Performing Arts**

**Young Alumni Commissioning Project**

**Valerie McKenna: Albright**
Photography exhibition
Mason’s Buchanan Hall Atrium Gallery  
August 26 – October 26, 2019

*Albright* is a photographic series investigating how to capture a portrait of a landscape. Large format film was exposed in Albright WV, developed, and then returned to be buried on location. Exposure to rainwater, bacteria, and other elements in the environment cause the resulting textures and tones in the emulsion. By incorporating the landscape physically with the negatives, the subject informs its own image. McKenna received one of two inaugural Young Alumni Creative Development Awards from the College of Visual and Performing Arts to support this project and its exhibition, as part of the Young Alumni Commissioning Project.

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra

**The Downtown Abbey Era**
Concert Hall  
Saturday, September 21 at 8 p.m.

*Janet Sung, violin*

John Lunn: Downton Abbey Suite  
Elgar: Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1  
Vaughn Williams: Lark Ascending  
Ravel: Tzigane  
Elgar: Enigma Variations

You are invited to an evening of all things quintessentially “British” — from the music of Downton Abbey in anticipation of the new movie, to the heavenly soaring of Vaughn Williams’ poetic music, to Sir
Edward Elgar’s music of Edwardian grace and artistry. According to The Guardian, Vaughn Williams’ Lark Ascending “...starts with the darkest, richest sounds a violin can make, then rises to an airy lightness, and it has become far and away Britain’s most popular piece of classical music.” Composed over 100 years ago, on the eve of WWI, this important work carries both a poignancy and beauty that are as powerful as ever. While conjuring images of bucolic, pastoral landscapes and the impossible beauty of the skylark’s song, you’ll hear a sense of loss, too, of this difficult time in Britain’s history. Elgar composed his much-loved Enigma Variations to depict “friends pictured within,” but the so-called enigma is an unplayed theme that he often hinted at but never revealed. The exquisite “Nimrod” Variation, performed for the opening of the 2012 Olympic Games in London, is also heard at the end of the 2017 film Dunkirk.

Fall for the Book 2019
A Celebration of 20 Years of Kid Pan Alley
October 12 from 12-2 p.m.
Harris Theatre

Enjoy a 20th-anniversary concert celebrating Kid Pan Alley’s new album release and the donation of the Kid Pan Alley and Paul Reisler archives to Mason Libraries’ Special Collections. With over 2,700 hundred KPA songs written with 65,000 children, the Kid Pan Alley Band and Three Good Reasons will be performing some of their favorite songs from the vast KPA catalog along with Reisler’s compositions. Sponsored by George Mason University Libraries Special Collections Research Center and the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

###

About the Center for the Arts
The Center for the Arts is the premier destination for the arts in Northern Virginia. Each year, the Center welcomes hundreds of thousands of community members into its 2000-seat Concert Hall. The centerpiece of artistic programming within the Center, Great Performances at Mason, is an annual season of national and international artists, featuring the best of classical music, opera, jazz, global music, dance, theater, and more. As a part of George Mason University’s College of Visual and Performing Arts, the Center hosts many student and faculty performances presented by the Schools of Music, Theater, and Dance as well as events for School of Art and the Film and Video Studies, Computer Game Design, and Arts Management programs. Understanding that an education in the arts is deepened by regular contact with the work of distinguished visiting artists, the Center for the Arts serves arts enthusiasts of all ages in the greater Washington, D.C. area.

About George Mason University
George Mason University is Virginia’s largest public research university. Located near Washington, D.C., Mason enrolls 37,000 students from 130 countries and all 50 states. Mason has grown rapidly over the past half-century and is recognized for its innovation and entrepreneurship, remarkable diversity and commitment to accessibility.

#MasonArts

PRESS CONTACT:
Kirstin Franko
Assistant Director of Marketing & Communications
703-993-8794 | kfranko@gmu.edu