



American Spiritual Ensemble

Everett McCorvey, Founder and Music Director

www.americanspiritualensemble.com

Program

I.

Walk Together, Children	arr. W. Henry Smith
I Stood on the River of Jordan	arr. Moses Hogan
I Can Tell the World	arr. Moses Hogan
In Bright Mansions Above	arr. Roland Carter
Come Down, Angels	arr. Undine Smith Moore
City Called Heaven	arr. Terence Blanchard
Lord, How Come Me Here	Traditional Negro Spiritual
Witness	arr. Hall Johnson
No More Auction Block	Traditional Negro Spiritual
Go Down, Moses	arr. Johnie Dean
I Know I've Been Changed	arr. Damon Dandridge
Crossing Ovah	Richard Jackson
Wanna Die Easy, When I Die	arr. Ysäye Barnwell
You Must Have That True Religion	arr. Roland Carter

(Intermission)

II.

Anchored in the Lord	arr. M. Roger Holland, II
God is a God	arr. Shawn Okpebholo
Great God Almighty	arr. Stacey V. Gibbs
Every Time I Feel the Spirit -Juba (<i>Lyric Suite</i>)	arr. Jacqueline Hairston
Lord, I'll Go	arr. Jacqueline Hairston
Three Spirituals	arr. Jacqueline Hairston
Stand the Storm	arr. Timothy Amukele
Ol' Man River (<i>Show Boat</i>)	Jerome Kern & Oscar Hammerstein II
Ol' Time Religion/When the Saints	arr. Everett McCorvey & Keith McCutchen
Circle of Life (<i>The Lion King</i>)	Elton John & Tim Rice

(Program subject to change)

The American Spiritual Ensemble was founded by Everett McCorvey in 1995. The mission of the American Spiritual Ensemble is to keep the American Negro Spiritual alive. Its members have sung in theaters and opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and abroad in Italy, Germany, Britain, Scotland, Spain, China, and Japan. In 2014, the American Spiritual Ensemble performed in the Folle Journée Festival in Nantes, where the reviewers commented that the musicians provided the audience with “a tremendous explosion of joy.” In its 30-year history, the group has given over 100 concerts in Spain, as well as performances in other parts of Europe, South America, and throughout North America. The repertoire of the American Spiritual Ensemble ranges from opera to spirituals to Broadway. The members of the American Spiritual Ensemble are soloists in their own right and have thrilled audiences around the world with their dynamic renditions of classic spirituals, jazz, and Broadway numbers highlighting the Black experience.

Everett McCorvey is a native of Montgomery, Alabama. He received his degrees from the University of Alabama, including a Doctor of Musical Arts. As a tenor soloist, Dr. McCorvey has performed in major centers around the world including the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, Radio City Music Hall in New York and in England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, China, Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Republics. He joined the Tony Award winning Sherwin Goldman Production of *Porgy and Bess* at Radio City Music Hall in 1982 and was also part of the Metropolitan Opera's Debut Production of *Porgy and Bess* in 1985. Dr. McCorvey is the founder and Music Director of the *American Spiritual Ensemble*, www.americanspiritualensemble.com, a group of 24 professional singers performing spirituals and other compositions of African American composers dedicated to keeping the American Negro Spiritual alive. McCorvey's career has spanned all areas of the performing arts business from performer to musical director, stage director, voice teacher, producer, impresario, conductor, union representative, administrator, and mentor. He is in his tenth season as the Artistic Director of the National Chorale of New York City www.nationalchorale.org. He conducted the National Chorale, along with the US Army Field Band and Soldiers' Chorus at Liberty State Park in New Jersey this past September 11th, in the 20th Anniversary Commemoration of the attacks on our country. He is on the opera faculty in the summers at the Bay View Music Festival in Petoskey, MI, www.bayviewassociation.org/performingarts/musicfestival, and is co-director of the Bay View Music Festival's American Negro Spirituals Intensive program, a program dedicated to helping young singers learn about the American Negro Spirituals. He has served on the faculty of the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria, and is a frequent guest conductor with the Ocean Grove Choral Music Festival in Ocean Grove, NJ. He holds an Endowed Chair in Opera Studies at the University of Kentucky where he is Director of Opera and Professor of Voice. www.ukoperatheatre.org. He is of the belief that every citizen should find ways to give back to their community and to their profession in which they serve, and with that in mind, he serves on many local, regional, and national boards and committees. In his home state of Kentucky, he is Chairman of the Kentucky Arts Council Board and nationally he is on the Sullivan Foundation Board of Trustees, www.sullivanfoundation.org, an organization dedicated to supporting young professional singers with career grants and study awards for continuing development. In September of 2010, Dr. McCorvey served as the Executive Producer of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Alltech 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games, which was broadcasted on NBC Sports and was viewed by over 500 million people worldwide. He is married to soprano Alicia Helm. They have three children. www.everettmccorvey.com

Founder and Music Director

Everett McCorvey

Assistant Conductor

Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming

Business/Company Manager

Peggy Stamps, SquarePegGroup, Inc.

Talent and Auditions Support

Kenneth Overton

Logistics

Nathaniel Thompson

Sales Support

Amelia Groetsch

Tour Members of the American Spiritual Ensemble

Sopranos

Grace Ashley
Angela M. Brown
Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming
Mariah Graves
Alicia Helm

Altos

Dominique Cooper
Frank Espinosa
Hope Koehler
Darryl Taylor

Tenors

Christon Carney
Bryan Ijames
David Pelino
Andrew Tran
John Wesley Wright

Basses

Edwin Jhamaal Davis
Nathan De'Shon Myers
Tshildizi Ndou
Kenneth Overton
Nigel Sangster
Nathaniel Thompson

Pianist

Tedrin Blair Lindsay

Percussion

Ali Abdul Barr

The American Spiritual Ensemble is represented in the United States by Alkahest Artists & Attractions, Inc.

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or in Europe by

Quintana Artist Management, Bob Quintana, Personal Representative

<https://quintanaartists.com>

VISIT THE AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE WEBSITE AT:

www.americanspiritualensemble.com

Biographies

Grace Ashley, soprano, is a passionate performer and voice teacher. Her work both onstage and in the voice studio is driven by her belief that music is a universal and necessary tool for communication and human connection. Ms. Ashley is currently a DMA candidate at the University of Kentucky and studies under Dr. Everett McCorvey. She recently made her Kentucky Opera debut in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.

Ali Barr, percussionist, was born in Philadelphia. He has been playing percussion instruments and jazz trumpet, from childhood under the guidance of his father, Dr. James Barr, and master drummer, Bobby Crowder. A graduate of Temple University in Philadelphia, Ali has recorded and performed extensively with various artists, including Grammy nominated Russell Gunn, the legendary Roy Ayers, and Jamaleddeen Tacuma.

Soprano **Angela Brown**'s multi-award-winning career has been lauded on the front page of The New York Times, on CNN and CBS, in Oprah Magazine and Reader's Digest. Angela is featured on the two-time Grammy Award® winning recording "Ask Your Mama" by Laura Karpman. Her voice is the inspiration for multiple new works.

Christon Carney, tenor, and native of Nashville, TN, received his Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the New England Conservatory. He's performed various roles with Nashville Opera, Nashville Symphony, Nashville's Heimermann Chorale, Boston Lyric Opera, and the Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra. He is currently Education and Community Programs Coordinator at the prestigious Mechanics Hall and is a vocal instructor at the Pakachoag Community Music School in Worcester.

Dominique "Didi" Cooper, mezzo-soprano, is a vibrant singer, who recently graduated with a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance at the University of Louisville. Throughout her career, she has performed works by Juliana Hall, H. Leslie Adams and Gioachino Rossini in concert; and has recently performed as the title role in *Carmen*, Sylvia in *Rapture*, and as Sarah's Friend in *Ragtime* the Musical.

Jeryl Cunningham-Fleming, soprano, and Assistant Director of the American Spiritual Ensemble, has performed in more than ten countries and on four continents. She has recorded extensively with ASE and other artists. Her solo CD, *Stand the Storm: Anthems, Hymns, and Spirituals of Faith and Hope* was released in 2016. She is a featured soloist on Courtney Carey's 2023 recording, *I Wanna Be Ready*. For more information, visit www.jerylcunningham.com.

Edwin Jhamaal Davis, bass from Utica, Mississippi, is praised by *Voce di Meche* for his "juicy, booming and room-filling bass" and "mesmerizing, fully immersed acting." He has performed at major opera houses in the United States and abroad. Recent highlights include soloist in Verdi's *Requiem* and appearances at Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Opera.

Frank Espinosa, countertenor, is a nationally awarded vocalist and teacher from Los Angeles, Ca. He holds a Master of Music Degree from Boston University and has performed in many operatic works by Handel to the titular role of Floyd's, Susannah. He was a past Regional Encouragement Award winner of the 2022-2023 Laffont Competition.

Mariah Graves, soprano, is a dynamic performer studying Vocal Performance at the University of Kentucky. She has excelled in opera, musical theater, and art song, having competed nationally and in Europe. Her versatility has showcased in her performances of roles ranging from Madame Flora to *The Medium* to Mrs. Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to her portrayal of Nicki Marron in *The Bodyguard the Musical*.

Alicia Helm, soprano, has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, Opera Carolina, Aspen Music Festival, Chautauqua Opera, Miami Opera, Acadiana Symphony Orchestra/Opera-Louisiana, toured with the American Spiritual Ensemble and given concerts in Spain, England, Brazil, the Czech Republic and Japan, and many more. She is also the Artist in Residence at The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Lexington, KY.

Bryan Anthony Ijames, D.M.A. A dynamic conductor, tenor, and educator, he serves as Assistant Professor of Music Education and Associate Director of Choral Activities at Florida Gulf Coast University. Passionate about championing diverse voices, mentoring aspiring musicians, and revitalizing overlooked works, his dedication to artistry, innovation, and equity inspires students, empowers colleagues, and fosters growth within the choral arts community.

Hope Koehler, soprano has performed in opera, concerts, and recitals in the USA, Canada, South America, Europe, and Asia. She is a featured soloist on several CDs with the American Spiritual Ensemble, and her two solo recordings, *The Songs of John Jacob Niles* and *Lost Melodies* are available through ASE and on Amazon. She is the owner/founder of High Hopes Music Academy in Tullahoma, TN.

Tedrin Blair Lindsay, a pianist, composer, and musicologist from Rome, Italy has been a professional performer since the age of ten. He currently serves on the opera faculty at the University of Kentucky, where he earned a Ph.D. In 2009, and at FIO-Mondo (Festival of International Opera) in Urbana, Italy. He performs throughout the world as a collaborative pianist and soloist, and has produced two solo albums, *Tedrin* (2015) and *It Is Well with My Soul* (2016).

Nathan De'Shon Myers, American singer/conductor, has an international hybrid career that spans more than 26 years. He has been a soloist with opera companies and orchestras throughout the United States and across Europe. A former fest soloist with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, he is now an associate Professor of Voice at Arizona State University and remains an active solo artist.

Tshilidzi Ndou, South African baritone, performs internationally, winning awards in the George Shirley Vocal Competition and Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Recent roles include Escamillo, Samuel, and Schaunard, with upcoming performances as Prince Yamadori in 2025.

Kenneth Overton, baritone, is a 2021 Grammy Award Winner, and a two-time Billboard Top 10 Recording Artist. Career Highlights include appearances with The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, New York City Opera, Royal Danish Opera, Welsh National Opera, L'Opera Montreal, Palacio Bellas Artes, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and a Broadway Debut in Baz Luhrman's Production of *La Boheme*. Kenneth's recent recording, *The Living Spiritual*, released in 2025. For more information: www.KennethOverton.com

David Pelino, tenor, has performed with music organizations and professional ensembles across the country. Praised for his "powerful tenor" voice (South Florida Classical Review) on the concert and opera stage, some of his credits include being the tenor soloist masterworks such as Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Hailstork's *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes*, and Bach's *St. John Passion*. Recent role debuts include Sam in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* and Wesley Harris in Paul Moravec's *Sanctuary Road*.

Peggy Stamps, Business Affairs, is the founder/owner of The SquarePeg Group, Inc. (SPG), a New York City based talent management company. SPG represents performers who have appeared in major feature film, television, and Broadway productions. Peggy is a graduate of Purdue University Schools of Engineering and retired from a Fortune 100 high tech corporation in 2010.

Nigel Sangster, bass, has sung the lead role in Dubois' *Seven Last Words of Christ*, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Jersey City. He has been featured on BBC in performances with The Mile Long Opera Company, New York City. Also to his credit is the 2020 Winter Tour with The American Spiritual Ensemble. In Spring 2022, performed and filmed Mozart's Requiem with the National Chorale, New York City.

Nathaniel E. Thompson, Bahamian American bass-baritone, has performed in many countries including, Europe, Asia and South America. Most recently, Mr. Thompson performed as the Undertaker, in Cincinnati Opera's production of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. He has degrees from Kentucky State University and the University of Kentucky in Liberal Arts, Vocal Arts, and M.A. in Arts Administration.

Andrew Tran, tenor, is a recent graduate of the University of Kentucky pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance from Louisville, Kentucky. Recently, he joined the Louisville Orchestra in debuting Oswald Huynh's *A Different Pond* as narrator. With the University of Kentucky, he has performed "Basilio" from W.A. Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* and "Elder Hayes" in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*.

John Wesley Wright, D.M.A., tenor, is known for his soulful interpretations of music from baroque to Broadway. Holding degrees from Maryville College and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Wright has performed throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. Winner of the American Traditions Competition 2000, John is a native of Rome, GA, and coordinates the voice program at Salisbury University in Maryland.

