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PRESS IMAGES

Harris Theater Presents 2020-21 Season

English National Ballet in Akram Khan's *Creature* international premiere; return of Paris Opera Ballet; Cape Town Opera's *Mandela Trilogy*; Sir Antonio Pappano conducting Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Maxim Vengerov; Javier Camarena, Joyce DiDonato, and Patricia Racette in intimate recitals, expanded *Mix at Six* series featuring two summer rooftop concerts

Chicago, Ill. — The Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater for Music and Dance announces its *Harris Theater Presents* season for 2020-21, its most ambitious and diverse lineup to date. With 36 performances — including one international premiere and North American exclusive, Chicago debuts, and artists representing 11 countries and countless cultural influences — the 2020-21 season reaffirms the Harris Theater's commitment to presenting a multitude of voices and genres on its stage in Millennium Park.

"As a presenter, we have the opportunity to bring artists from throughout the country and around the world to Chicago to share their work," said Patricia Barretto, Harris Theater President and CEO. "It's something I take very seriously — in curating a season we are committed not only to the highest artistic quality, but also to providing a space for artists who have something to say, for stories that feel relevant to the city in which we reside."

"This season touches on themes like xenophobia, trauma, political revolution, human flaws and fragility, creation, and legacy," Barretto continued. "These topics can be divisive, but when addressed through an intensely personal perspective, in the universal languages of music and movement, they can remind us just how much we have in common as human beings. We believe deeply in the power of the arts to connect us to one another, and our 2020-21 programming reflects that belief."

This season marks a significant expansion of *Harris Theater Presents Mainstage* music offerings, with the addition of three vocal recitals with some of the biggest names in opera today: **Javier Camarena**, the Mexican tenor whose gleaming high notes and flawless coloratura have earned rare encores at the Metropolitan Opera; Kansas City-born mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato** in a program ranging from Baroque to American jazz standards; and soprano **Patricia Racette** with a program of songs by French chanteuse Edith Piaf. **Antonio Pappano** will lead the **Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia** with violinist **Maxim Vengerov**, Vengerov's first Chicago appearance since 2015. **Cape Town Opera** will make its Chicago debut with the moving and powerful ***Mandela Trilogy***, which employs a unique fusion of traditional Xhosa songs, jazz, and modern music to depict the life of anti-apartheid revolutionary and South Africa's first democratically elected President, Nelson Mandela.

The 2020-21 *HTP Mainstage* dance season features **English National Ballet** (ENB) in the international premiere and exclusive North American presentation of ***Creature***, the first new work for ENB from **Akram Khan** since his reimagined *Giselle* garnered rave reviews and sold out performances around the world. Khan will also open the dance season with his solo work ***XENOS*** — marking his final tour of the work as a dancer. **Paris Opera Ballet** will also return to Chicago for the first time since 2012 in ***Le Parc***, the exquisite and sensual 1994 work by **Angelin Preljocaj**, his first commission for the storied company. All three presentations will include live music — an onstage quintet of international musicians in *XENOS*, and the skillful playing of Chicago Philharmonic to accompany Paris Opera Ballet and English National Ballet.

Mix at Six includes seven performances in 2020-21, with five presentations on the Harris Theater stage and two summer concerts on the Theater's rooftop overlooking Millennium Park. New Orleans's **Dwayne Dopsie and The Zydeco Hellraisers** will open the season on the rooftop, followed by Chilean jazz guitarist **Camila Meza and The Nectar**

Orchestra. Appearing on the Theater stage will be France's **Compagnie Herve KOUBI** in *The Barbarian Nights or The First Dawns of the World*, which draws on Koubi's Algerian heritage and is performed by twelve Algerian and Burkinan dancers; Haitian-American composer and vocalist **Nathalie Joachim with Spektral Quartet**; a new commission from Chicago dancemaker **Ben Wardell and The Cambrians**; San Francisco singer-songwriter **Meklit** whose music draws on folk, jazz, and the music of her native Ethiopia; and a mixed repertoire program from **The Chicago Academy for the Arts** dance ensemble.

Of *Mix at Six*, Barretto added, "The success of this series has shown us again and again that there is an incredible appetite for the live performing arts in our city, spanning every age, income, identity, and community. This year we will continue to present diverse artistic voices, offer a casual and inclusive atmosphere, and keep the price point accessible because we believe that the arts are for everyone. Our hope is that all Chicagoans can feel at home at the Harris, and see themselves reflected on our stage"

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center celebrates its 10th year in residence at the Harris in 2020-21 with four intimate evening concerts, and for the first time, an appearance on the Theater's popular *Family Series*. **The Percussion Collective** completes the 2020-21 *Chamber Music Series* with **Seaborne**, a new original work evoking the beauty and fragility of our planet's oceans, performed alongside Steve Reich's seminal work *Sextet*.

The 2020-21 *Family Series* will open with **The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center** in *Albert and Wolfgang*, a classical music adventure with narration and video projection that explores the connections between two legendary geniuses – Albert Einstein and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. CMS will be joined on the *Family Series* by local performance collective **Manual Cinema** in their enchanting work of puppet theater *The Magic City*, along with **Cape Town Opera** presenting *Freedom In Our Time*, a special program which will introduce young audiences to the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela.

[EXPLORE THE SEASON AND PURCHASE SUBSCRIPTIONS HERE](#)

Subscriptions are on sale now for 2020-21 *HTP Mainstage*, *Mix at Six*, *Chamber Music*, and *Family Series*. 2020-21 *Beyond the Aria* dates and artists will be announced this summer.

2020-21 AT A GLANCE

August 19, 2020 / 6:00PM	<i>Mix at Six Rooftop</i> : Dwayne Dopsie and The Zydeco Hellraisers
September 2, 2020 / 6:00PM	<i>Mix at Six Rooftop</i> : Camila Meza and The Nectar Orchestra
October 15, 2020 / 7:30PM	<i>Chamber Music Series</i> : The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center <i>Spanish Inspirations</i>
October 17, 2020 / 2:00PM	<i>Family Series</i> : The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center <i>Albert and Wolfgang</i>
November 6, 2020 / 7:30PM November 7, 2020 / 7:30PM	Akram Khan <i>XENOS</i>
November 10, 2020 / 6:00PM	<i>Mix at Six</i> : Compagnie Hervé KOUBI <i>The Barbarian Nights or The First Dawns of the World</i>
December 2, 2020 / 6:00PM	<i>Mix at Six</i> : Nathalie Joachim with Spektral Quartet <i>Fanm d'Ayiti</i>
December 8, 2020 / 7:30PM	Patricia Racette <i>Piaf: No Regrets</i>
December 16, 2020 / 7:30PM	<i>Chamber Music Series</i> : The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center <i>From Prague to Vienna</i>
January 21, 2021 / 6:00PM	<i>Mix at Six</i> : The Cambrians <i>Chicago Dances</i>

February 4, 2021 / 7:30PM February 5, 2021 / 7:30PM February 6, 2021 / 2:00PM + 7:30PM	Paris Opera Ballet <i>Le Parc</i>
February 17, 2021 / 7:30PM	Joyce DiDonato <i>Songplay</i>
February 26, 2021 / 7:30PM February 27, 2021 / 7:30PM	Cape Town Opera <i>Mandela Trilogy</i>
February 27, 2021 / 2:00PM	Family Series: Cape Town Opera <i>Freedom in Our Time</i>
March 3, 2021 / 7:30PM	Chamber Music Series: The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center <i>The Great Sonatas</i>
March 18, 2021 / 7:30PM March 19, 2021 / 7:30PM March 20, 2021 / 2:00PM + 7:30PM	English National Ballet Akram Khan's <i>Creature</i> – INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE
March 24, 2021 / 7:30PM	Chamber Music Series: The Percussion Collective <i>Seaborne</i>
April 10, 2021 / 7:30PM	Javier Camarena
April 15, 2021 / 7:30PM	Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Antonio Pappano, <i>conductor</i> Maxim Vengerov, <i>violin</i>
April 17, 2021 / 2:00PM	Family Series: Manual Cinema <i>The Magic City</i>
April 27, 2021 / 6:00PM	Mix at Six: Meklit
April 28, 2021 / 7:30PM	Chamber Music Series: The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center <i>Brahms Effect</i>
May 6, 2021 / 6:00PM	Mix at Six: The Chicago Academy for the Arts

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE 2020-21 HTP MAINSTAGE SEASON

Akram Khan

XENOS

Friday, November 6, 2020 / 7:30PM

Saturday, November 7, 2020 / 7:30PM

XENOS, a solo work created and performed by Akram Khan, gives voice to the shell-shocked dream of a colonial soldier in the First World War, revealing the beauty and horror of the human condition in its portrait of an Indian dancer whose skilled body becomes an instrument of war. Shifting between classical kathak and contemporary dance, *XENOS* takes place on the border between East and West, past and present, mythology and technology, where humanity still stands in wonder and disarray.

The sole dancer in this “triumph of energy, empathy and intelligence” (*Telegraph UK*), Khan is accompanied onstage by five international musicians: percussionist B C Manjunath, vocalist Aditya Prakash, bass player Nina Harries, violinist Clarice Rarity, and saxophonist Tamar Osborn.

Patricia Racette

Piaf: No Regrets

Tuesday, December 8, 2020 / 7:30PM

Patricia Racette, one of the premier American sopranos of her generation, makes her *HTP Mainstage* debut in an evening of Edith Piaf, accompanied by pianist Craig Terry. Piaf's songs of love, loss, and sorrow made her the national chanteuse of France and one of the country's most widely known and loved artists. In Racette's own words, "I find myself continually coming back to the songs of Piaf ... because of the raw, visceral nature of her delivery, the kind of drive that melded its way into all aspects of my own artistic identity over the years. Trying to emulate Piaf is not the goal -- that has been done. This evening is my chance to put my voice on songs that create windows into the soul of her tragic and triumphant life."

Paris Opera Ballet

Le Parc

Thursday, February 4, 2021 / 7:30PM

Friday, February 5, 2021 / 7:30PM

Saturday, February 6, 2021 / 2:00PM

Saturday, February 6, 2021 / 7:30PM

With origins in the 17th century, Paris Opera Ballet (POB) is one of the world's oldest and most storied ballet companies. Returning to Chicago for the first time since 2012, now under the direction of former étoile Aurelie Dupont, POB will perform Angelin Preljocaj's contemporary story ballet, *Le Parc*. In this piece specifically created for the Paris Opera Ballet in 1994, Preljocaj finds a subtle balance between the classical genius of Mozart's music and the modernity of his choreographic language. The perfectly chiseled sets evoke the elegance and refinement of a French-style garden while the costumes draw inspiration from the Age of Enlightenment. The dancers awaken to love, from first encounters to seduction, from timidity to attraction, from resistance to the sweet appeal of abandon in sublimely soaring "pas de deux".

Joyce DiDonato

Songplay

Wednesday, February 17, 2021 / 7:30PM

In *Songplay*, mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato unites extraordinary musicians from the varied worlds of opera, jazz, and tango in the pure pleasure of improvisation, experimentation, and exchange. Along with her hand-picked band led by pianist and arranger Craig Terry, Joyce draws inspiration from Cavalli and Chet Baker in equal measure. The Olivier and Grammy Award-winning DiDonato first appeared on the Harris Theater stage in 2017 with *In War and Peace*, which demonstrated the healing power of music that brings people together on the path towards peace. *Songplay* picks up from that place of peace and leaps into the realm of joy: it is an all-encompassing celebration of song – one in which there are no boundaries or rules.

Cape Town Opera

Mandela Trilogy

Friday, February 26, 2021 / 7:30PM

Saturday, February 27, 2021 / 7:30PM

As Africa's premier opera company and South Africa's largest non-profit performing arts organisation, Cape Town Opera (CTO) fosters the expression of a national identity through the creation and performance of new South African works, alongside classics of the genre. *Mandela Trilogy* is a CTO original production that highlights the unique and forceful sound of the African voice, employing a unique fusion of traditional Xhosa songs, jazz tunes, and modern music in honor of one of the world's most inspiring statesmen, Nelson Mandela. The work consists of three acts – an encounter with traditional rural music, a jazz musical, and an opera – representing the diversity of expression in contemporary South Africa, and reflecting the evolution of Mandela's political and personal life.

English National Ballet

Akram Khan's Creature

Thursday, March 18, 2021 / 7:30PM – INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

Friday, March 19, 2021 / 7:30PM

Saturday, March 20, 2021 / 2:00PM

Saturday, March 20, 2021 / 7:30PM

Following the pivotal impact of his reimagined *Giselle*, Akram Khan returns to English National Ballet for his third collaboration with the company. *Creature* is an unearthly tale of exploitation and human frontiers inspired by Georg Büchner's expressionist classic *Woyzeck*, with shadows of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Drawing on themes of abandonment, isolation and the fragility of the mind, *Creature* is the tale of an outsider and the search for belonging. Khan is joined by a brilliant creative team of Academy Award-winning designer Tim Yip, composer and sound designer Vincenzo Lamagna, lighting designer Michael Hulls and dramaturg Ruth Little.

Akram Khan on *Creature*: “The outcast, the stranger, have been a common theme in my work. In *Creature*, I am looking further into the areas related to the sense of abandonment, rage and loss.”

A co-production between English National Ballet and Opera Ballet Vlaanderen

Co-Producer: Sadler’s Wells, London

Production Partner: The Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater

Javier Camarena

Saturday, April 10, 2021 / 7:30PM

Mexican tenor Javier Camarena, the preeminent Mozart and bel canto specialist of his generation, returns to Chicago for the first time since his “sensational” (*Chicago Tribune*) debut at the Harris in 2016. Praised for his burnished tone, gleaming high notes, flawless coloratura, and veracious portrayals, he regularly appears in leading roles alongside today’s foremost stars at the world’s top opera houses and was the face of Opera News’s 80th anniversary edition this past January. Last season, as Ernesto in Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale*, he became only the second singer in Metropolitan Opera history to perform encores in multiple productions at the house, after the audience demanded a repeat of his aria “E se fia che ad altro oggetto.” Camarena went on to repeat the same feat in *La fille du régiment* at Madrid’s Teatro Real, followed by his recent triumph there in his debut as Gualtiero in Bellini’s *Il Pirata*.

Javier Camarena and pianist Ángel Rodríguez have been musical partners for many years and perform recitals all over the world. They recently engaged in a highly acclaimed recital tour throughout Spain and landed an outstanding coup with their solo recital debut at the Los Angeles Opera.

This program presents the essence of Bel Canto repertoire and shows Javier Camarena’s great agility and expertise. Well-loved arias by Gounod, Donizetti, Verdi, and Bellini are paired with Laló or Flotow in a lovely program, promising another sensational evening in Chicago.

Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia

Antonio Pappano, conductor

Maxim Vengerov, violin

Thursday, April 15, 2021 / 7:30PM

The Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Roma was the first orchestra in Italy to devote itself exclusively to the symphonic repertoire. Founded in 1908, the Orchestra has been conducted by some of the major musical figures of the 20th century, such as Mahler, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Strauss, Karajan, Bernstein and Abbado. Sir Antonio Pappano, one of the world’s most sought after conductors, has been in the role of Music Director since 2005. Pappano and the Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia will be joined in their Harris Theater debut by violinist Maxim Vengerov, “one of the most brilliant violinists you’ll ever hear” (*Washington Post*).

*****Programs, prices, and dates are subject to change*****

SPONSORSHIP

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- Kenneth C. Griffin Charitable Fund, *Harris Theater Presents* Dance Series Sponsor
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- Mellody Hobson and George Lucas, *Mandela Trilogy* Engagement Lead Sponsor

TICKETS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Flex Pack and series subscriptions are available now [online](#) and at the Harris Theater Box Office. Patrons can build a Flex Pack subscription by selecting three or more of the above *Harris Theater Presents Mainstage* performances. Subscribers gain access to the best seats, deepest discounts, and unique benefits including:

- A 40% discount on *Harris Theater Presents* tickets
- Access to discounted parking in the Millennium Park Garage – \$20 for 6 hours – available to purchase online

- Discounts and special offers when dining with Harris Theater Restaurant Partners, including Acanto, The Gage, Beacon Tavern, Park Grill, and Remington's
- Invitations to special events, artist talks, and receptions throughout the season

To purchase a subscription or request a brochure, contact the box office at 312.334.7777 or visit in person at 205 East Randolph. Box Office hours are noon to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and performance days.

ABOUT THE HARRIS THEATER FOR MUSIC AND DANCE

The mission of the Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater is to be Chicago's home for music and dance, connecting diverse audiences with outstanding artists from across the city, the nation, and the world.

Opened in November 2003 in Millennium Park, the Theater was the first multi-use performance venue built in downtown Chicago since 1929, and fulfilled the city's need for a shared home for mid-size performing arts organizations. Today, the Harris features the most diverse arts and culture offerings of any venue in the city, and is a distinctive model for artistic quality, collaboration, and making the performing arts relevant and accessible to the widest possible audience.

The Theater's presenting series brings the highest caliber artists from every corner of the world to Chicago audiences, and showcases artists who tell stories of human experiences from a multitude of perspectives. Spanning five curated series, *Harris Theater Presents* performances have represented over 30 countries across six continents, from emerging voices to world-renowned artists including Laurie Anderson, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Joshua Bell, Batsheva Dance Company, English National Ballet, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Angélique Kidjo, Paris Opéra Ballet, and Silk Road Ensemble.

Founded on the principle of serving Chicago's vibrant community of performing arts organizations, the Theater provides subsidized rental, production, marketing, and professional development support for its Resident Companies. Since 2003, the Theater has served as a home for over 55 local arts and humanities organizations such as Giordano Dance Chicago, Music of the Baroque, Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, Chicago Humanities Festival, Chicago Opera Theater, Puerto Rican Arts Alliance, and WBEZ Chicago, among many others. The Theater has become a sought-after venue for important civic and cultural events as well as touring music and dance companies. Organizations hosting their engagements at the Harris bring unique opportunities for collaboration between Chicagoans and the world's leading thinkers, innovators, and artists.

A city with a strong foundation of arts and culture nurtures future generations of artists and audiences. The Harris breaks down barriers to experiencing the arts by building an inclusive environment, and featuring accessible and captivating performances for all ages in the Mix at Six and Family Series. By cultivating relationships with the world's leading artists and partnerships with local organizations across the healthcare, human services, and education sectors, the Harris facilitates master classes for aspiring artists, enrichment activities for all ages, and youth performance opportunities in tandem with Harris Theater Presents. Through these community partners, the Theater's Access Tickets program has provided over 16,000 free performance tickets, ensuring that the arts reach as many individuals and families as possible.

To learn more about the Harris Theater, visit www.harristheaterchicago.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).