

# A Note From *Bill's Desk*

McCarter

*Get a behind-the-scenes glimpse via Bill Lockwood, Director of Special Programming at McCarter, about how and why he brings phenomenal artists to our McCarter stages. This week, he spotlights **Cécile McLorin Salvant** and **Stewart Goodyear**, both of who will be on the Berlioz stage in the upcoming weeks.*

December 7, 2021

Cécile McLorin Salvant

When Wynton Marsalis asked me who he should keep an eye on in the next generation of potential jazz giants, the first name was Cécile McLorin Salvant, who returns to the Berlioz Theatre this Saturday, December 11th. Winner of three Grammys, a MacArthur "Genius" Grant and the Doris Duke Award, she has rapidly ascended the pantheon as arguably the finest jazz singer of the past decade. How did she do it? Quite simply, with her four-octave range and vocals, which reference the history of her esteemed female predecessors - Black singers from Billie Holiday and Ella to Betty Carter and Shirley Horn, and that her concerts provide a unique historical perspective, incorporating both jazz standards as well as her own original compositions. Salvant's songs from the minstrel tradition challenges us to think harder about race in America today, and her presence is marked not only by her by-now trademark big glasses, but by the way she "plays with time," making the musical past speak to our contemporary world.

Salvant also likes to involve different musical collaborators: when she played at McCarter's Jazz in June Festival in 2019, her partner was the pianist Fred Hersch; and this week, she will be joined by flutist Alexa Tarantino, guitarist Marvin Sewell, percussionist Keita Ogawa, and pianist Sullivan Fortner – with whom she made her CD *The Window*, an album of duets (PS: For the record, Fortner's name was also on the list from Wynton Marsalis referenced above!)

Stewart Goodyear plays Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* (Complete)

Most of us think we know the music for *The Nutcracker* by heart – we have heard it all, we say to ourselves, a million times. But what we usually hear is the orchestral suite from the ballet, so we haven't really heard it all – all 82 minutes – and when we hear it, we are usually watching it danced at the same time, so our eyes are on the dancers, but our ears are not on the music. The Canadian pianist Stewart Goodyear thought it was high time to do something about this - to focus on just the music. In 2015, he made his own solo piano arrangement of Tchaikovsky's original score, which he brings to the Berlioz Theatre on Sunday afternoon, December 19th. Seeing is believing, but so is hearing – and I can guarantee that you will hear parts of *The Nutcracker* you have never heard before, even if you think you have; Goodyear just needs ten fingers to make you forget all about an orchestra.

This may sound like a novelty, but it is far from it, and there is much more music to *The Nutcracker* than just the familiar Suite that dance companies use. In fact, there is a long history and heritage of piano arrangements of orchestral and operatic works, pioneered by Liszt and championed a century later by Vladimir Horowitz and other virtuosi. So while Goodyear's *Nutcracker* may have brought him critical notice, his real background and investment, as with most pianists, is in the piano works of Beethoven. And what really brought him attention – you might even say notoriety – was his 2012 *Beethoven Sonatathon*, in which he played all 32 of the composer's sonatas in the order of their composition in three separate recitals in a single day - which he did at the Berlind Theatre for McCarter that same year.

Tchaikovsky's complete score is also kind of a "sonatathon" all by itself; but while it has 24 sections, it's a lot shorter!

—William L. Lockwood, Jr.  
Director of Special Programming

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William L. Lockwood, Jr." in a cursive style.