

WEST END CHURCH PRESENTS



Manhattan Opera Repertory Ensemble

A Concert of Strength and Unity

**Friday, November 8, 2024
7:30 PM**

**West End Church
245 West 77th Street, NYC 10024**

**Dr. Patricio Molina, Music Director
Cheryl Warfield, Producer**



A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER:



Welcome Everyone!

I am Cheryl Warfield, founder and artistic director of ADVANCE/MORE Opera, a performing arts and educational not-for-profit based here in Manhattan. We welcome you and are pleased to present “Undivided Spirit,” a post-election concert of reflection and harmony. Our mission is to provide performing opportunities to professional, emerging, student, and amateur artists while making opera and classical music accessible.

This concert is the culmination of free chorus training and pop-up performances presented throughout Manhattan this year. Your presence this evening gives meaning to this endeavor in pursuit of consensus, empathy, and mutual respect. We are grateful to West End Church for the use of this beautiful sanctuary for rehearsals and performances, and would like to thank Matt Puckett, Program Director, Lynne Mold and the Local Board, the Reverend Will Critzman, and the building staff for their support. We are pleased that members of West End Church Community Choir are participating with us tonight.

As we come together to celebrate our shared values and the spirit of being American through music, let us take pride in our unity and strength, and continue to embrace the values that make us proud. Let us stand together in pursuit of a united vision of peace and hope with one accord.

This concert is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Marilu Galván, executive director of Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano (CCCD) in Harlem, with whom I had the privilege of collaborating during the last year of her life. Dr. Galván taught me a great deal about leadership and shared interests. Several members of CCCD have joined us to perform in this concert.

With gratitude,

Cheryl Warfield

Founder and Artistic Director

ADVANCE/MORE Opera

www.moreopera.com

PROGRAM

Through Moanin' Pines

Harry T. Burleigh

*Along de desolate roads we pass
Thro' lonely pines and wither'd grass
De win' moans in de branches tall
An' a heavy sadness broods o'er all*
--L.A.B.

Patricio Molina, Piano

Prayer

H. Leslie Adams

Emmanuel Cruz, Tenor

Oh, Freedom

African American Spiritual

MORE Opera Chorus

Wrong Is Never Right

Scott Joplin

Emmanuel Cruz

I Wanna Sing/Swing Low/When the Saints Go Marchin' In Medley

Oh, What a Beautiful City

African American Spirituals

MORE Opera Chorus

Hay Una Antilla

Unknown/Dominican

Emmanuel Cruz
MORE Opera Chorus

Sarambo

Julio Alberto Hernandez

Vic Ortiz, Flute
Patricio Molina, Piano

El Espejo
Compadre Pedro Juan

Juan Francisco Garcia
Luis Alberti

Gabriel De Los Santos, Vocalist
Leonardo De Jesus, Percussion

Por Amor

Rafael Solano

Cheryl Warfield and Gabriel De Los Santos

Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit
Deep River

Harry T. Burleigh

Cheryl Warfield, Soprano

De Gospel Train

Harry T. Burleigh

Rachel Silverstein, Soprano

I Am Seeking for a City

Patricio Molina

Veronica Lewis, Mezzo-Soprano and Chorus

A Real Slow Drag, from "Treemonisha"

Scott Joplin

Entire Ensemble



Undivided Spirit is made possible in part with funds from Creative Engagement, a regrant program supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. The following companies and individuals also provided support:

Bronx Music Heritage Center
Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano
Frank Cipriano
Judith Insell
James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center
Marcella Matthews
Microsoft Corporation
Raquel Solomon
Mary Speciale
The Warfield Family

In-kind Contributions:

Brazilian Opera Company
Community Church of Douglaston
Monica Dadrás
Laura Forero Torres
Lawyers Alliance for New York/IBM
Mallory Molina
Sheila Neisler, Catalyst for Small Biz
Esther Nikolic
NonProfit New York
Cheryl Warfield

Special thanks to:

Mort Berkowitz
Gregory Buchalter
José Cenac
Nadine Herman (mentor and teacher to Gabriel De Los Santos)
Tom Holman
Ellen Walterscheid

If our mission resonates with you, please consider making a tax-deductible donation at <https://www.moreopera.com/how-to-donate>



MANHATTAN OPERA REPERTORY ENSEMBLE

Artists

Maria Alcantara**
Angela Castillo**
Michael Conway
Emmanuel Cruz
Ricardo Figueroa
Samuel Flores
Laura Forero
Marcia Golata*
Sonia Lebron**
Veronica Lewis
Miguel Malo**
Milagros Mendez**
Esther Nikolic
Colleen Pappas
Sarah Polen
Fatima Pura Veras**
Martha Rodriguez**
Judith Schwartz*
Rachel Silverstein
Nino Spallacci
Mayan Summer*
Yusuf Abdullah Tillery
Yolanda Veras**
Ellen Walterscheid*
Cheryl Warfield

Guest Artists

Leonardo De Jesus | Gabriel De Los Santos | Vic Ortiz

Cheryl Warfield, Producer
Dr. Patricio Molina, Music Director

*** West End Church Community Choir Member**
**** Member of Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano**

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Emmanuel Cruz, Tenor

Emmanuel Cruz has had the privilege of performing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at Yankee Stadium, Madison Square Garden, and Izod Center, and for distinguished guests including President Bill Clinton, film director Spike Lee, boxer Oscar de la Hoya, and Senator Hillary Clinton. He has performed opera roles including Polidoro (*La Finta semplice*), Bill (*A Hand of Bridge*), Don Curzio (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Orpheus (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*), Dorvil (*La Scala di seta*), Contino Belfiore (*La Finta giardiniera*), Eddie Fislinger (*Elmer Gantry*), and High Priest (*Saul*).

Emmanuel has performed extensively as a soloist and choir member at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, and has performed in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Houston, and Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia. He has also performed as a lead vocalist in various Latin ensembles throughout the New York City area, a reflection of his Puerto Rican and Cuban heritage.

Emmanuel received a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Houston, and a bachelor's degree in music education from Montclair State University.

Outside of music, Emmanuel is a self-professed multifaceted geek who enjoys researching and discussing various aspects of pop culture while combining his musical training and knowledge.

Leonardo De Jesus, Percussionist

Leonardo "Leo" De Jesus is a versatile percussionist based in New York City, specializing in orchestral and Latin percussion. Having honed his craft at New Jersey City University, where he studied under renowned percussionists Dr. Greg Giannascoli and Rolando Morales-Matos, Leo has over 10 years of experience in a variety of musical styles and applications, from musical theater pit orchestras to directing and arranging for salsa bands. Leo has established himself as a sought-after freelance Latin percussionist in the NYC-NJ area. He was the founder, musical director, and timbalero of the 14-piece Skyline Salsa Band and regularly plays with Anonima Orquestra, Litha Symphony Orchestra, and other local ensembles.

Gabriel De Los Santos, Vocalist

Gabriel De Los Santos started singing at a young age and was one of the youngest contestants of Telemundo's "La Voz Kids." From there he was accepted on full scholarship into the Carollo program at the Newark School of the Arts and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, where he studies voice with music director Nadine Herman. Gabriel's performance credits include "Showtime" at the Apollo with Steve Harvey and music director Ray Chew. He also won the Celia Cruz award at the Emmy Award-winning "Hispanic Youth Showcase." Gabriel was selected as a performer for the grand opening of the Grammy Museum at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey. He also made his debut at the Bergen Performing Arts Center as an opening act for the Celia Cruz All Stars, and is a six-time winner at Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater.

Veronica Lewis, Mezzo-Soprano

Veronica Lewis has been a New Yorker now for 38 years. Since moving here, she has been fortunate enough to travel around the world singing with the Harlem Spiritual Ensemble and as Annie in *Porgy and Bess*. She is a member of both SAG-AFTRA and Actors' Equity. Veronica has done commercial work, including a Budweiser commercial with Chris Rock, and has appeared in many TV shows and movies. She has performed with MORE Opera and the Metropolitan Opera Guild Community Choir. She is also the host and co-producer of a YouTube travel show called "Let's Go Dutch". With 23 episodes already completed, Veronica just recently got back from Japan, where she filmed two more upcoming episodes. www.letsgodutchtv.com.

Dr. Patricio Molina, Music Director

Named a "gifted artist" by *The New York Times*, Patricio Molina, DMA, PhD, has gained a reputation as a composer, pianist, and educator. He regularly appears on stages such as Carnegie Hall and Opera America. Patricio is a Yamaha Artist. The New Jersey Youth Symphony, White Snake Projects, Legacy Arts International, and Ulysses Quartet are among the many artists and institutions who have recognized his talents with commissioned works. Inspirations for his compositions include his Chilean-Syrian heritage, mythology, and literature, as well as his experience as an immigrant. His accomplishments in the field of arts education have been recognized by the New Jersey Education Association with their prestigious Award for Excellence.

Patricio is in demand as a lecturer on a wide variety of topics including composition, Arabic music, and building inclusion in classical music and has presented his research and expertise at institutions such as the College Music Society National Conference, the National Association for Music Education, the New Jersey Music Educators Association, and the Penn State International New-Music Festival and Symposium.

Patricio holds a master's degree with distinction from the Manhattan School of Music. In 2019, he earned the first double doctorate in the history of Rutgers University: a DMA in piano performance and a PhD. in music composition. He serves as director of the Conservatory for Newark School of the Arts, and music director at St. Thomas the Apostle Church of Bloomfield, New Jersey. He is founder and president of the Pan-Global Music Initiative, a nonprofit foundation that seeks to promote classical music from underrepresented cultures. Patricio was recently awarded a Postdoctoral Fellowship at Universidad Católica Nordestana (DR) and has begun work on a book for student pianists based on beloved Caribbean melodies, set for publication in 2026.

Vic Ortiz, Flautist

Vic Ortiz was born in DR and learned how to play the flute when he immigrated to the United States. He received the Carollo Scholarship where he studied with Aki Kasuga in Newark School of the Arts. He graduated from Montclair State University with his bachelors in Music Education. During his time there, he had studied under Allison Loggins-Hull, Bruce Williams and Alice Jones. He had the privilege to travel to Czech Republic, Germany and Austria with the MSU wind ensemble for the WASBE 2022 conference. He also created and led the Afro-Caribbean Ensemble with the help of Oscar Perez. Currently, he is a middle school general music teacher in Paterson as well as part of the staff in the Carollo program of Newark School of the Arts.

Rachel Silverstein, Soprano

Rachel Silverstein is a New Jersey-based performer and a voice teacher with Hillsdale Music and Arts LLC. She received her master of music in opera from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University and was awarded the Michael Fardink Memorial Award for outstanding vocalist upon her graduation in 2022.

Cheryl Warfield, Soprano

Cheryl Warfield is the founder and artistic director of Manhattan Opera Repertory Ensemble (MORE Opera), an NYC-based nonprofit blazing a trail in culturally responsive musical programming and arts education to make opera and classical music accessible to underserved audiences. For more than 25 years, MORE Opera has offered free performances, educational initiatives, and community choral training to ensure people from all socio-economic backgrounds and age groups can realize the social, cognitive, and health benefits of exposure to the arts. MORE's offerings are tailored to meet the needs of the communities it serves, including bilingual Spanish and English programming, and interactive choral training for adults aged 60 and over.

In addition to her work in the nonprofit sector, Cheryl created Classical Vocal Arts for Children (CVAC) and is a private vocal coach. She is certified as a Minority Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) by the M/WBE Program at the NYC Department of Small Business Services. She is a proud member of multiple performing arts unions, including Actors' Equity, SAG-AFTRA, and AGMA.

Cheryl began classical vocal training at the age of 13. She graduated from the Ohio State University with a degree in business administration, then continued her vocal training at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Known as "The Oprah of Opera," she has captivated audiences with her performances of some of the most recognized soprano roles in renowned opera houses around the world and on Broadway.



West End Church

Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey; whatever you doubt or believe, know that you are entirely welcome here. West End Church is one of four congregations of the Collegiate Church of the City of New York, and the sanctuary you're sitting in today dates to 1892. The congregation is young and older, of many races, nationalities, genders, and sexualities. We come together to do what none of us can do alone: we gather to be a witness of hope in a world that so needs it.

Come back and join us on December 14 at 4pm for a Christmas Concert by our Community Choir and a Carol Sing-along featuring, well, everyone! For a complete schedule of programs, please visit our website,

westendchurch.org



The Manhattan Opera Repertory Ensemble (MORE Opera) transforms lives and inspires excellence by presenting concerts and educational programs of the highest quality to the general public and under-served audiences including disadvantaged youths and elderly persons throughout Manhattan and beyond. MORE Opera's concerts and training programs are produced under the umbrella of ADVANCE – the Association for the Development of Vocal Artistry and Neighborhood Cultural Enrichment, a 501(c)(3) vocal arts organization that strives to make classical music and opera accessible and affordable to the general public.