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presents

An Evening with a Basso

Kevin Thompson, *bass*

Mark Irchai, *piano*

Thursday, September 25, 2025

7 pm

Recital Hall



There will be one 15-minute Intermission.

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Program

Music for a while

Henry Purcell

Già il sole dal Gange
O del mio amato ben
Danza, Danza fanciulla
Tu lo Sai

Alessandro Scarlatti
Stefano Donaudy
Francesco Durante
Giuseppe Torelli

From *Liederkranz für die Bassstimme, Op. 145*
Meeresleuchten
Heimlichkeit

Karl Loewe

From *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*
“O, wie will ich triumphieren”

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

15-Minute Intermission

From *Old American Songs*
The Dodger
Simple Gifts
Ching-a-ring

Aaron Copland

From *Troubled Island*
“I dream a world”

William Grant Still

Steal Away
Oh Freedom
O Redeemer

arr. H.T. Burleigh
arr. Roland Carter
arr. Uzee Brown, Jr.

Biography



Kevin Thompson, Bass, Praised by *The New York Times* as a “stentorian bass,” Kevin Thompson “possesses a voice with extraordinary range, depth, color combined with a commanding stage presence... a mountain of a voice, with resonance from the Escorial of Philip II to the throne of Boris Godunov, and the majestic court of Sarastro...” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*).

Last season, Mr. Thompson joined Florentine Opera as the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, Washington Opera Society as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Opera Southwest for Verdi’s *Requiem*, Eureka Symphony for *Messiah*, Colline in *La Bohème* in Puglia, Italy, and Bard Music Festival for Martinů’s *Julietta*. This season, he returns to Washington National Opera as Antonio in *Le nozze di Figaro*, debuts Herny in Jake Haggie’s *Intelligence* at Virginia Opera, and he brings his signature Bonze to Fort Worth Opera for their *Madama Butterfly*.

In recent seasons, the acclaimed bass performed as Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* for Opera Colorado, the Duke of Verona in *Roméo et Juliette* for Dallas Opera, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for Opera Grand Rapids, the King/Baobab/Hunter in *The Little Prince* with Utah Opera, Timur in *Turandot* with Fargo Moorhead Opera, and on the Mobile Symphony’s annual Christmas concert. He also joined The Atlanta Opera to sing Church Jenkins in a workshop of *Forsyth County is Flooding* as part of their new works festival, and he sang Father Truelove in *The Rake’s Progress* with Lakes Area Music Festival. Mr. Thompson made house debuts with Washington National Opera as both Der Pfleger des Orest and Ein alter Diener in *Elektra*, with Fort Worth Opera as Il Re in *Aida*, and with Utah Opera as Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. In concert, Mr. Thompson returned to Opera Omaha for an Opera Outdoors Concert with scenes as the title role in Boito’s *Mefistofele*; he sang with Roanoke Opera for their Opera Gems Gala Concert; he sang Verdi’s *Requiem* with Eureka Symphony; and with Odyssey Opera, he performed Rachmaninoff’s *Troika*: The Old Gypsy in *Aleko*, Ivan in *The Miserly Knight*, and The Ghost of Virgil in *Francesca da Rimini*. Thompson also joined Bard Music Festival for two rarely heard works, singing Canterbury in Saint-Saëns’ *Henry VIII* and Pistol in Vaughan Williams’ *Sir John in Love*. He performed Il Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* with San Antonio Opera; the Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila* with Bob Jones Opera; Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* with Nashville Opera; the First Nazarene in *Salome* with Tulsa Opera; Oroveso in *Norma* with Festival Opera; and he was seen in the world premiere of *Southern Crossings* by Zaid Jabri at Barnard College in New York City. Concert engagements included Verdi’s *Requiem* with Johnson City Symphony Orchestra, Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* with The Florida Orchestra, and performances with Roanoke Opera.

Biography - *continued*

In the pandemic season of 2020/21, Mr. Thompson made his début in Bulgaria with State Opera Ruse singing the role of Polonius in the world premiere of *Hamlet* by Joseph Summer. In the same season, Thompson was seen in *Rigoletto* twice: as Sparafucile with Shreveport Opera and as Monterone with Tulsa Opera. Thompson also joined Tulsa Opera for their *Greenwood Overcomes* concert, in addition to engagements with Pocono Mountains Music Festival and Opera Omaha.

Mr. Thompson has performed under the baton of many an esteemed conductor in opera houses and concert venues throughout the world, including Austria, Bulgaria, China, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Spain, South America, Switzerland, and the United States. Thompson has made débuts with New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera, New Orleans Opera, Tulsa Opera, Opera Carolina, Bard Opera, National Philharmonic, The Florida Orchestra, Opera Santa Barbara, Odyssey Opera, Hannover Staatsoper, Fundación Teatro Nacional Sucre in Ecuador, Teatro Verdi Trieste, Hong Kong Opera, Teatro Regio di Parma, State Opera Ruse, Theater Kiel, the Gasteig in Munich, and the Wexford Opera.

Mr. Thompson's previous roles include: Ramfis and Il Re (*Aida*); Osmin (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*); Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*); Mephistophélès (*Faust*); Oroveso (*Norma*); Sparafucile and Monterone (*Rigoletto*); Grand Inquisitor (*Don Carlos*); Banco (*Macbeth*); Lodovico (*Otello*); Il Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*); Raimondo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*); Don Basilio (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*); The Old Gypsy (*Aleko*); Colline (*La bohème*); Judge Turpin (*Sweeney Todd*); Ned (*Treemonisha*); El Capitán (*Florencia en el Amazonas*); Hans Schwartz (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*); and Stefano Colonna (*Rienzi*). On the concert stage, Thompson's engagements have included Verdi's *Requiem*; Mozart's *Requiem*; Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* and *Missa Solemnis*; Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*; Haydn's *The Creation* and *Lord Nelson Mass*; and Stravinsky's *Les Noces*.

Mr. Thompson was born in Washington, D.C. He is an alumnus of The Juilliard School in New York, San Francisco Opera's prestigious Merola program, and the Santa Fe Opera program. As a permanent part of the Smithsonian Institute's Hirschorn Gallery in Washington, D.C., Mr. Thompson is featured singing "Old Man River" in occurring audio walk artwork exhibit entitled "*Words Drawn in Water*" by artist Janet Cardiff. Recordings include Verdi's *Requiem* with Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra, Dessau's *Haggadah shel Pesach* with the American Symphony Orchestra, Rice's *Thy will be done* with the National Choral Society, Polonius in Joseph Summer's *Hamlet* with Navona Records, and King Soliman in Gounod's *La reine de Saba* with Odyssey Opera. You can find more info at: www.KevenThompsonBass.com

Biography - *continued*



Mark Irchai is an American concert pianist and conductor, hailed as a “virtuoso... who perform[s] with gorgeous balance” (*Wednesday Music Club*). Recently featured on broadcasts for WQXR (NYC Public Radio) and KPBX (Spokane Public Radio), his concertizing has taken him across the United States and Europe, where he has become known for his diverse musical programming and multi-colored sound. His awards include 1st prizes at the XIV International Orfeo Music Competition, the George Mason University Concerto

Competition, and the Golden Classical Awards International Music Competition. He was also awarded the Newton Swift Award in Collaborative Piano by the Mannes School of Music, in recognition of his accomplishments as a collaborative pianist.

As a notable up-and-coming pianist, Irchai performs in recital to regularly sold-out audiences in venues such as Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Dumbarton Oaks, the embassies of Turkey and Austria to the United States, and many others. Additionally, Irchai has been presented on numerous concert series, such as the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic's Lyceum Concerts, the Ocala Symphony Orchestra's SoundArt series, and George Mason University's Grand Piano Celebration. Irchai has collaborated with prominent artists such as John Aler, Marlisa Woods, Vasilisa Berzhanskaya, Kerry Wilkerson, Danielle Talamantes, Jamie Reimer, and Janet Hopkins. He performs regularly with duo partner Amanda Zoe Vest, mezzo-soprano, and with the Continuum Chamber Collective (CCC).

As a conductor, Irchai frequently collaborates with orchestral and choral musicians of the highest caliber. He has led in performance musicians from the National Philharmonic, the National Symphony, the US Army Orchestra, the US Army Chorus, the Singing Sergeants, the Peabody Institute, and other high-profile institutions of music. He has also worked as an assistant conductor for a number of ensembles, including the George Mason University Singers, Chorale, and Mason Opera. His assistant conductor position with the Mason Symphony Orchestra in the 2018-19 season led him to a performance with soloist Eddie Adams, which was later featured on CBS News and Reuters. In the 2023-24 season, Irchai was a finalist for the position of Music Director of the Reston Community Orchestra. In the 2024-25 season, Irchai joins the staff of both the Reston Community Orchestra and The McLean Symphony as Cover Conductor. In the 2025-26 season, Irchai continues in his third year as Artistic/General Director of Loudoun Lyric Opera, the resident opera company of Loudoun County, VA.

Biography - *continued*

A committed educator, Irchai is currently an adjunct professor at Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester, VA, and is on faculty at the Levine School of Music in Washington DC, and the Berkshire High Peaks Music Festival in Great Barrington, MA. He also teaches piano and conducting lessons both virtually and in-person from home in Falls Church, VA.

Irchai holds a BM in piano performance from George Mason University, where he studied piano and chamber music with Anna Balakerskaia and orchestral, choral, and band conducting with Dennis Layendecker, Stan Engebretson, Mark Camphouse, and Anthony Maiello. He has also studied piano at the International Orfeo Music Festival with Anna Balakerskaia, and at the Summit Music Festival with Efreim Briskin. Additionally, he studied orchestral conducting at the International Academy of Advanced Conducting after Ilya Musin with Oleg Proskurnya and Scott Woodard. He has appeared in masterclasses with artists such as George Li, Pavel Nersessian, Vadim Monastyrski, Awadagin Pratt, Faina Lushtak, Leon Schelhase, Claire Huangci, and Richard Goode. Most recently, he obtained an MM in Piano Performance from the Mannes School of Music, studying under the direction of Simone Dinnerstein, and chamber music with Rebecca Fischer, J.Y. Song, and Cristina Stancu.

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