

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperformances.org
Rusty Barnes 510.642.9121
rbarnes@calperformances.org

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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS JESSICA RIVERA AND
KELLEY O'CONNOR IN WORLD PREMIERES OF
SONG CYCLES BY JONATHAN LESHNOFF AND DAVID BRUCE
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13 AT 3:00 P.M. IN HERTZ HALL**

Pianist and music director Robert Spano accompanies the celebrated singers

BERKELEY, September 12, 2013—Soprano [Jessica Rivera](#) and mezzo-soprano [Kelley O'Connor](#) will premiere song cycles by composers [Jonathan Leshnoff](#) and [David Bruce](#) in a program of solos and duets on Sunday, October 13 at 3:00 p.m. in Hertz Hall. Pianist and conductor [Robert Spano](#) will accompany the two singers. The program also includes the Bay Area premiere of *Cantos de la Cocina* by Berkeley native **Gabriela Lena Frank**, a Grammy Award-winning composer and pianist who writes metaphorically of love and life through the act of cooking; the work was composed for Rivera and is performed by her and O'Connor. "Rivera's singing is so distinctive in tone—and so unabashedly beautiful" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), while O'Connor, who makes her Cal Performances debut, is acclaimed for "the beauty of her singing, the way every word [is] given meaning" (*Los Angeles Times*).

Both O'Connor and Rivera's new song cycles receive their world premieres at Cal Performances, where they and Spano kick off a nationwide tour that includes stops in Georgia and Ohio, and culminates with a performance in Carnegie Hall. Leshnoff's new work for Rivera, *Monica Songs*, blends texts from the Book of Ruth, Emily Dickinson, e.e. cummings, and personal letters to explore themes of life and death, love and loyalty, and joy and sorrow. Rivera, a champion of new composers, also premiered a Carnegie Hall-bound work by Mark Grey when she last sang at Cal Performances in 2011. Leshnoff's recent compositions span flute, guitar, and cello concerti, string quartets, and orchestral works, and have been lauded for "sheer sonic beauty" (*Washington Post*). Bruce's work, *That Time with You*, for mezzo-soprano and piano, was commissioned by Carnegie Hall and Kelley O'Connor. Bruce, who has written for Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble and served as 2012–2013 composer in residence at London's Royal Opera House, has been praised for creating vocal lines that are "invitingly melodic and

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deceptively simple. Though they often have a folksy ring at first, they invariably grow more complex and varied” (*New York Times*). Solo works by Federico Mompou and Claude Debussy, and duets by Camille Saint-Saëns, Charles Gounod, and Felix Mendelssohn complete the concert.

Jessica Rivera’s performing career includes traditional and contemporary opera, concert halls, and intimate recitals. She has collaborated with composers, including John Adams, Osvaldo Golijov, and Nico Muhly, and sang the role of Nuria in the 2007 Grammy-winning recording of Golijov’s opera *Ainadamar* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Robert Spano. California native mezzo-soprano O’Connor also appeared on the *Ainadamar* recording as Lorca, and more recently sang in a world premiere staging by Peter Sellars of John Adams’s *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* conducted by Gustavo Dudamel. In addition to opera and recitals, O’Connor has sung in concert with many top orchestras, including the National Symphony Orchestra and symphony orchestras in Toronto, Atlanta, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Detroit, and has performed and recorded throughout Europe and Asia.

Accompanist Robert Spano is music director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Aspen Music Festival and School. He has conducted orchestras and opera companies worldwide, presented three world premieres in his twelve years in Atlanta, and contributed to six Grammy-winning recordings. As a pianist, he has performed works ranging from Bach to Gershwin to Rachmaninoff and accompanied artists, including bass-baritone Eric Owens, violinists David Coucheron and Yoon Jung Yang, and his frequent collaborator Jessica Rivera.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for Jessica Rivera and Kelley O’Connor, with pianist Robert Spano, in recital on Sunday, October 13 at 3:00 p.m. in Hertz Hall are \$32.00 but are subject to change. Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at [www.calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org); and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to <http://calperformances.org/buy/discounts.php>.

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Cal Performances thanks Wells Fargo and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their major support of the Season.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, October 13, at 3:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at College Ave., Berkeley

Recital

Jessica Rivera, soprano
Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano
Robert Spano, piano

Saint-Saëns/*El Desdichado* (Rivera and O'Connor)
Bruce/*That Time with You* (O'Connor) "world premiere"
Mompou/*Combat del Somni* (Rivera)
Gounod/*La Siesta* (Rivera and O'Connor)
Mendelssohn/*Ich wollt, meine Lieb' ergrösse*, Op. 63, No. 1 (Rivera and O'Connor)
Mendelssohn/*Volkslied (O sah ich auf der Heide dort)*, Op. 63, No. 5 (Rivera and O'Connor)
Debussy/*Chansons de Bilitis* (O'Connor)
Leshnoff/*Monica Songs* (Rivera) "world premiere"
Frank/*Honey & Sofrita*, from *Cantos de la Cocina* (Rivera and O'Connor) "Bay Area premiere"

Tickets are \$32.00 but are subject to change; they are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988; at calperformances.org; and at the door.

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