

REVISED PROGRAM

Friday, February 9, 2024, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

—MARIA MANETTI SHREM GREAT ARTIST PERFORMANCE—

Renée Fleming, *soprano*
Howard Watkins, *piano*

Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene

Prelude:

Jackson BROWNE (b. 1948) “Before the Deluge” (recording)
Arrangement: Caroline Shaw,
with Rhiannon Giddens, Alison Krauss,
Renée Fleming, & Yannick Nézet-Séguin, *piano*

*The following will be accompanied by a film provided by National Geographic.
The audience is asked to kindly hold applause until the end of the first half of the program.*

Hazel DICKENS (1925–2011) “Pretty Bird”
George Frideric HANDEL (1685–1759) “Care selve” from *Atalanta*
Nico MUHLY (b. 1981) “Endless Space”
Joseph CANTELOUBE (1879–1957) “Baïlèro” from *Chants d’Auvergne*
Maria SCHNEIDER (b. 1960) “Our Finch Feeder”
from *Winter Morning Walks*
BJÖRK (b. 1965) “All is Full of Love”
Howard SHORE (b. 1946) “Twilight and Shadow”
from *The Lord of the Rings*
Kevin PUTS (b. 1972) “Evening”
Curtis GREEN (b. 1995) “Red Mountains Sometimes Cry”
(recorded, during credits)
BACHARACH (1928–2023) “What the World Needs Now”
and DAVID (1921–2012)

INTERMISSION

Gabriel FAURÉ (1845–1924) “Au bord de l'eau”

“Les berceaux”

Edvard GRIEG (1843–1907) “Lauf der Welt”

“Zur Rosenzeit”

Giacomo PUCCINI (1858–1924) “O mio babbino caro”
from *Gianni Schicchi* (1918)

Jerome KERN (1885–1945) “All the Things You Are”

Andrew LIPPA (b. 1964) “The Diva” (2020)

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one that honors our venues as places of respite, openness, and respect.*

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When I was 14, the film *Soylent Green* was released, a sci-fi thriller about a dystopian future of worldwide pollution, dying oceans, depleted resources, and rampant starvation. The story was set in the year 2022.

The movie has faded from memory, but one scene left a profound impression. An aged researcher, unable to go on, has chosen assisted suicide at a government clinic. To ease his last moments of life, he is shown videos of a world that no longer exists: flowers and savannahs, flocks and herds, unpolluted skies and waters, all set to a soundtrack of classical music by Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, and Grieg.

This scene captured my imagination in a terrifying way. The impact increased when I later learned that the actor playing the researcher, Edward G. Robinson, was terminally ill at the time it was filmed.

Fast forward to the pandemic. After more than two decades of constant touring, usually to urban cultural centers, performances abruptly ceased, and I suddenly found myself at home. I sought comfort in long walks outside near my house. I needed this time outdoors to maintain my emotional equilibrium, and I was reminded that nature would always be my touchstone. At the same time, the news about climate change grew more alarming: the extinction of animals we took for granted when we were children, the knowledge that white rhinos had disappeared from the wild, and daily reports of heat, fires, and flooding. I realized that the crisis we had been warned of for so long had arrived.

I thought of the great legacy of song literature that I love, when Romantic-era poets and composers reveled in imagery of nature, finding reflections of human experience in the environment. I decided to record some of this music, and to juxtapose these classics with the voices of living composers, addressing our current, troubled relationship with the natural world.

The result, in collaboration with my friend Yannick Nézet-Séguin, was the album *Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene*. When it received the 2023 Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album, I was thrilled, and I had the idea to tour music addressing this theme of nature as both our inspiration and our victim.

I was incredibly fortunate to connect with the imaginative, dedicated leadership at the National Geographic Society, the global non-profit committed to exploring, illuminating, and protecting the wonder of our world. It has been so exciting to work with this universally respected, landmark institution. I am deeply grateful for the help of President and Chief Operating Officer Michael Ulica, Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler, and Producer/Editor Sam Deleon, whose expertise and vision have been instrumental in creating the video you will see on the first half of tonight's program.

Thankfully, the stunning natural world depicted in this film still exists, unlike that movie scene so upsetting to my younger self. In blending these beautiful images with music, my hope is, in some small way, to rekindle your appreciation of nature, and encourage any efforts you can make to protect the planet we share.

—Sincerely,
Renée Fleming

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Renée Fleming is one of the most highly acclaimed singers of our time, performing on the stages of the world's great opera houses and concert halls. Honored with five Grammy awards and the US National Medal of

Arts, she has sung for momentous occasions from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony to the Super Bowl. Last May, she was named a Goodwill Ambassador for Arts and Health for the World Health Organization, and in



Andrew Eccles

December, she received the prestigious Kennedy Center Honor.

Fleming's current calendar includes appearances in Paris, Milan, and Vienna, and at Carnegie Hall. Recent opera performances include starring in the world premiere staging of *The Hours*, a new opera based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and award-winning film, at the Metropolitan Opera, and a role debut as Pat Nixon in a new production of *Nixon in China* at the Opéra de Paris.

In January 2023, Decca released a special double-length album of live recordings from her iconic performances at the Metropolitan Opera, *Renée Fleming: Greatest Moments at the Met*. Fleming has recorded everything from complete operas and song recitals to indie rock and jazz. She earned a Tony award nomination for her performance in *Carousel* on Broadway, and her voice is featured in two Best Picture Oscar-winning films.

Fleming's new anthology, *Music and Mind: Harnessing the Arts for Health and Wellness*, will be published this spring. A prominent advocate for research at the intersection of arts, health, and neuroscience, as Artistic Advisor to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, she launched the first ongoing collaboration between America's na-



Daria Accesa

tional cultural center and the National Institutes of Health. She created her own program called *Music and the Mind*, which she has presented in more than 50 cities around the world. And she is now an advisor for major initiatives in this field, including the Sound Health Network at the University of California San Francisco and the NeuroArts Blueprint at Johns Hopkins University.

In addition to directing SongStudio at Carnegie Hall, Fleming is Co-Artistic Director of the Aspen Opera Theater and Vocal-ARTS at the Aspen Music Festival and School and Advisor for Special Projects at the Los Angeles Opera. Other awards include the 2023 Crystal Award from the World Economic Forum, the Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, and the Order of Merit from Germany. She holds honorary doctorates from eight leading universities. For more information, visit www.renee-fleming.com

American pianist **Howard Watkins** is a frequent associate of some of the world's leading musicians on the concert stage and as an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera. His appearances throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia, Russia, and Israel

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

have included collaborations with Joyce Di-Donato, Diana Damrau, Thomas Hampson, Kathleen Battle, Grace Bumbry, Mariusz Kwiecien, Anna Netrebko, and Matthew Polenzani at such venues as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Kennedy Center, the United States Supreme Court, Alice Tully Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Elbphilharmonie, and the Bolshoi Theater. His current and former faculty affiliations include the Juilliard School, the Bard College Conservatory of Music, the Merola Opera Program, the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Program, the Yale School of Music as a Visiting Presidential Fellow, the Tanglewood Music Center, the Aspen Music Festival, the Mannes

School of Music, the North Carolina School of the Arts, the International Vocal Arts Institute (Israel, Japan, and China), IIVA in Italy, the Brancaleoni Music Festival in Italy, the Tokyo International Vocal Arts Academy (TIVAA), and VOICEperience in Orlando, Tampa, and Savannah. A native of Dayton, Ohio, Watkins completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Accompanying and Chamber Music at the University of Michigan. Honored as the 2004 recipient of the Paul C. Boylan award from the University of Michigan for his outstanding contributions to the field of music, he is also the 2019 recipient of the Lift Every Voice Legacy Award from the National Opera Association.

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J. Henry Fair

Maria Manetti Shrem, Great Artist Performance Benefactor

Born in Florence, Italy, Maria Manetti Shrem moved to San Francisco in 1972. She became instrumental in the internationalization of some of the world's most iconic fashion brands, such as Gucci and Fendi under the umbrella brand of Manetti Farrow, designing a new and successful distribution system in North America and eventually boosting their global market.

In the 1980s, Maria created one of the most elegant estates in Napa Valley—Villa Mille Rose—where she hosted inter-

national artists and celebrities including Luciano Pavarotti, Sophia Loren, Renée Fleming, Plácido Domingo, Nancy Pelosi, Kamala Harris, Gavin Newsom, Isabel Allende, Marchese Piero Antinori, and Andrea Bocelli, to name only a few. As a result, she established herself as the quintessential ambassador of “Made in Italy” creations and Italian lifestyle in the San Francisco Bay Area.

She spends time between the San Francisco Bay Area and Florence and enjoys

traveling all over the world while continuing to learn about contemporary art, cultural heritage preservation, and the most refined winemaking brands.

Maria and her husband, Jan Shrem, have long contributed philanthropic support within the fields of education (colleges and high schools), fine arts (museums), performing art centers (operatic and symphonic concert halls), medical research, and non-profit cultural organizations in the US, Italy, and the UK. The Manetti Shrems currently support almost 50 charitable programs, with favorites in the US including Cal Performances, Festival Napa Valley, the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, the San Francisco Opera, KQED, the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, ArtSmart, SFFilm, Francisco Park (community garden), and UCSF (neurology) and CPMC (cardiology) hospitals. In Europe, Maria is one of the principal benefactors of the King's Foundation (The Garrison Chapel and Dumfries House), the Royal Drawing School, Friends of the Louvre, Friends of Versailles, the Italian National Trust (FAI), Palazzo Strozzi Museum Foundation, Museo Novecento, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, and the Andrea Bocelli Foundation, with whom she has supported the construction of four new schools, including one at Meyer Children's Hospital with the contribution of Festival Napa Valley.

The Manetti Shrems are co-founders of the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis, which opened its doors on November 13, 2016, realizing a goal that was 60 years in the making. The museum's collection includes works by major California artists such as Wayne Thiebaud, William T. Wiley, Robert Arneson, Roy De Forest, Ruth Horsting, Manuel Neri, and Roland Petersen. The museum holds 30% of its space for educational and hands-on projects, providing a dedicated area for workshops, like in the Florentine Renaissance tradition of the "Bottega del-

l'Arte" where artists can learn by doing. The extraordinary architectural design of the museum—which was praised in *ARTnews* as "One of The World's 25 Best Museum Buildings of the Past 100 Years," curated by New York-based architect Florian Idenburg (SO-IL)—has already won 18 awards (six from international organizations); it has also been listed as one of the nation's top 10 teaching museums.

Maria has received numerous prestigious awards and recognitions as an outstanding and influential cultural ambassador strengthening the relationships between the US and Italy, California and Tuscany, and the San Francisco Bay Area and Florence. In 2019, the President of Italy, Sergio Mattarella, bestowed upon her the title of "Grand Officer of the Order of the Star of Italy." On March 16, 2022, the mayor of Florence, Dario Nardella, awarded her "The Keys of the City of Florence" as an inspiring role model of patronage following the Renaissance legacy of the Medici family, defining her as "the new Elettrice Palatina"—the latest heiress of the Medici family. On June 22, 2022, Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem were the inaugural recipients of "The Angels of the Arts Award," Festival Napa Valley's highest honor. On the same occasion, the Mayor of San Francisco, London Breed, along with the county and the city, proclaimed June 22, Manetti Shrem Day, dedicated to fostering philanthropy. On December 3, 2022, she was honored with The Spirit of the Opera Award from San Francisco Opera, bowing hand in hand with the artists on stage at the end of the last performance of *La Traviata*. On June 18, 2023, Maria Manetti Shrem was honored with the 2023 UC Davis Medal, putting her in company with 2020 Nobel Laureate Charles Rice, artist Wayne Thiebaud, former President Bill Clinton, and fellow philanthropists Robert and Margrit Mondavi in recognition of extraordinary contributions that embody UC Davis' vision.