



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 22, 2022

**Maryland Lyric Opera
presents**

**A Memorial Concert
for Leon Fleisher**

Tuesday, August 2, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

**The iconic performer and educator,
who had deep ties to the local community and to MDLO,
is remembered in this special evening of music**

(BETHESDA, MARYLAND)—Maryland Lyric Opera (MDLO) is proud to present [A Memorial Concert for Leon Fleisher](#), a one-night-only tribute to the legendary pianist and conductor, on Tuesday, August 2, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. at The Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda, Maryland. Long a champion of MDLO's efforts to bring music into the local community, Fleisher gave his last public performance on stage at Strathmore with the MDLO Orchestra in 2019. He died in Baltimore the following year at age 92.

To honor Fleisher's memory and celebrate his legacy, MDLO has crafted an all-French program that marshals the company's full musical forces under the baton of Music Director Louis Salemno. The concert begins with Jules Massenet's solemn Méditation

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from *Thais* featuring MDLO Orchestra Concertmaster José Miguel Cueto as the featured violin soloist; then, pianist Cecile Licad plays Camille Saint-Saëns's mesmerizing Piano Concerto No. 2. in her MDLO debut. In the second half, the MDLO Orchestra and Chorus come together for Gabriel Fauré's haunting Requiem, featuring soprano Nayoung Ban and baritone SeungHyeon Baek, two alumni of MDLO's artist-development program. [Tickets](#) for this night of music and memory are on sale now.

About Leon Fleisher

Leon Fleisher was one of the most renowned pianists and conductors of his time. At the age of 16, he made his Carnegie Hall debut with the New York Philharmonic; conductor Pierre Monteux called him "the pianistic find of the century," and *The New York Times* wrote that he "established himself as one of the most remarkably gifted of the younger generation of American keyboard artists."

He was the first American to win the gold medal at the prestigious Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels in 1952. His recordings of the Brahms and Beethoven piano concertos with George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra, made from 1958 to 1963, are considered among the most vivid and moving accounts of those works.

At the peak of his performing career, he became unable to use his right hand due to a malady known as focal dystonia; instead, he would only perform pieces written for the left hand. Years later, he made a triumphant two-handed comeback to performing. A documentary film about his struggle with focal dystonia, *Two Hands*, was nominated for an Academy Award in 2006.

He was also acclaimed as a conductor, including time as associate conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and music director of the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra. He was beloved as a teacher for more than 60 years at conservatories such as the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. With Dina Koston, he founded the Theater Chamber Players, an ensemble first based at the Washington Theater Club, later at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, and ultimately at the Kennedy Center. Among many other awards, he received the Kennedy Center Honors in 2007. His memoir, *My Nine Lives: A Memoir of Many Careers in Music*, co-written with *Washington Post* music critic Anne Midgette, was published in November 2010.

For his final stage performance, on November 12, 2019, Fleisher joined the MDLO Orchestra and conductor Louis Salemno for an inspiring performance of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12. He died in Baltimore on August 2, 2020, at the age of 92.

About the Soloists

A native of Puerto Rico, **José Miguel Cueto** is the Concertmaster of the Maryland Lyric Opera Orchestra, a position he also holds with the Chesapeake Festival Orchestra, and performs worldwide as a chamber musician and guest soloist with major orchestras. He is on the violin faculty at the Catholic University of America and at St. Mary's College of Maryland. He holds degrees from the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music and from the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He plays a 1920 Stefano Scarampella, and a 2006 Luiz Bellini violin.

Filipino pianist **Cecile Licad**, originally scheduled to perform for MDLO audiences in the 2019-20 season that was lost to the pandemic, makes her MDLO debut with this performance. She has appeared as a soloist with some of the world's most important orchestras, including those of Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and London, as well as with the major orchestras of Germany, Japan, and Russia. She has worked with some of the world's renowned conductors, including Seiji Ozawa, André Previn, Claudio Abbado, Charles Dutoit, Sir Neville Marriner, Eugene Ormandy, and Sir Georg Solti.

South Korean soprano **Nayoung Ban**, an alumnus of the MDLO Institute, recently appeared with the company as Susanna in performances of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and as Tebaldo and the Celestial Voice in Verdi's *Don Carlo*. She made her acclaimed company debut in the title role of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 2019. Additionally, she has performed Musetta in Puccini's *La bohème* with Opera Ithaca and Lauretta in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* with Mannes Opera.

A native of South Korea, baritone **SeungHyeon Baek** is an alumnus of the MDLO Institute and has appeared with the company as Frate and a Flemish Deputy in Verdi's *Don Carlo*, as Sonora in Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*, and as Enrico in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. His performances this season include Yamadori in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with Canadian Opera Company and the title role in *Rigoletto* with Opera Orlando. He made his Carnegie Hall debut as a soloist in Fauré's Requiem.

Performance information

A Memorial Concert for Leon Fleisher Tuesday, August 2, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.

Featuring the Maryland Opera Orchestra & Chorus conducted by Louis Salemno

Méditation from *Thaïs* by Jules Massenet
José Miguel Cueto, violin

Piano Concerto No. 2 by Camille Saint-Saëns
Cecile Licad, piano

Requiem by Gabriel Fauré
Nayoung Ban, soprano
SeungHyeon Baek, baritone

[The Music Center at Strathmore](#)

5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda, Maryland 20852

Running time: Approximately 90 minutes, including one intermission

Ticket information

Tickets for **A Memorial Concert for Leon Fleisher** start at \$25; all tickets for students are \$10 with student ID. [Tickets are on sale now](#), or call the Strathmore Ticket Office at 301.581.5100 for more information.

Health & safety

For the most current information about Strathmore's health & safety policies, please visit <https://www.strathmore.org/your-visit/vax-faqs/>.

About Maryland Lyric Opera

Maryland Lyric Opera is a regional opera company created “for musicians, by musicians.” Founded by accomplished pianist and local philanthropist Brad Clark, MDLO combines a diverse performance schedule of fully staged grand opera, concert opera with the MDLO Orchestra center stage, and intimate recitals featuring acclaimed soloists with a rigorous training program that fosters the careers of the next generation of opera stars.

Led by Music Director Louis Salemno, MDLO employs a full orchestra and a full chorus for its productions. Since our reorganization and relaunch in 2018, we have produced three fully staged operas at The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center in College Park: Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Massenet's *Thaïs*, and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. At The Music Center at Strathmore, we have presented concert performances of Puccini's rarely performed *La Fanciulla del West* and his final opera *Turandot*, Verdi's epic *Don Carlo*, as well as double bills of one-act operas. Recent concerts have included individual programs celebrating Mozart, Puccini, and Verdi, as well as a memorable performance of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12, K. 414 by the legendary pianist and pedagogue Leon Fleisher in his final stage performance.

MDLO's growing family of supporters is metropolitan Washington DC's vibrant, diverse, and international community. While we live in a modern and dynamic world, our aim is for our audiences to pause and experience harmony and beauty through classic operas.

We are committed to bringing young audiences to the world of opera—thanks to the generosity of our donors and patrons, students may purchase any seat in the house for \$10 with a student ID. Looking towards the future, we are planning to expand our repertoire, to initiate and grow outreach programs that embrace our community, and to bring music to underserved youth and adults.

Discover [MDLO](#) on social media:



#MDLOFleisher

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