



Cécile McLorin Salvant and Aaron Diehl

Cécile McLorin Salvant / *Vocals*
Aaron Diehl / *Piano*

Thursday Evening, February 6, 2020 at 7:00
Thursday Evening, February 6, 2020 at 9:00
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre
Ann Arbor

62nd and 63rd Performances of the 141st Annual Season
26th Annual Jazz Series
UMS Song Remix

This evening's performances are supported by Michael Allemang and Janis Bobrin.

This evening's performances are funded in part by JazzNet Endowment Fund.

Media partnership provided by WEMU 89.1 FM, WRCJ 90.9 FM, and Ann Arbor's 107one.

Ms. McLorin Salvant and Mr. Diehl appear by arrangement with The Kurland Agency.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

This evening's programs will be announced by the artists from the stage and are performed without intermission.

ARTISTS

The world first learned of the incredible vocal artistry of **Cécile McLorin Salvant** when she won the prestigious 2010 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition. In just under the span of a decade she has evolved from a darling of jazz critics and fans, to a multi-Grammy Award-winner, to a prescient and fearless voice in music today.

In life and in music, Ms. McLorin Salvant's path has been unorthodox. The child of a French mother and Haitian father, she was raised in the rich cultural and musical mix of Miami. She began formal piano studies at age five and started singing with the Miami Choral Society at age eight. Growing up in a bilingual household, she was exposed to a wide variety of music from around the world through her parents' wide-ranging record collection. While jazz was part of this rich mix, her adolescent and teenage years were focused on singing classical music and Broadway. Following her desire to study abroad, she enrolled in college (Aix-en-Provence in the south of France) to study opera and law. Ironically, it was in France that Ms. McLorin Salvant began to really discover the deep roots of jazz and American music, with the guidance of instructor and jazz saxophonist Jean-François Bonnel. Bonnel's mentoring included bringing Ms. McLorin Salvant stacks of CDs, covering the work of jazz and blues legends as well as its lesser-known contributors. Working through these recordings, Ms. McLorin Salvant began building the foundation needed to thrive and occupy a special place in the august company of her predecessors.

Three years later, Ms. McLorin Salvant returned to the US to compete in the prestigious Thelonious Monk International

Jazz Competition. On the urging of her mother she entered the contest, but with little sense of what was awaiting her. The expatriate American jazz singer from France, surprising everyone (herself included), took top honors in the jazz world's most demanding competition. An illustrious panel of judges — Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dianne Reeves, Kurt Elling, Patti Austin, and Al Jarreau — noted her impeccable vocal technique, innate musicality, and gifts as an interpreter of popular song. "She brought down the house," reported the *Washington Post*. Yet, as music critic Anne Midgette observed, "Her marathon is just beginning."

Since 2010, Ms. McLorin Salvant has soared to the top of the music world, garnering praise and gathering awards. "She has poise, elegance, soul, humor, sensuality, power, virtuosity, range, insight, intelligence, depth, and grace," announced Wynton Marsalis. "You get a singer like this once in a generation or two." She has been honored with top spots in *DownBeat*'s critic's polls in the categories of "Jazz Album of the Year" and "Top Female Vocalist." NPR Music has awarded her "Best Jazz Vocal Album of the Year" and "Best Jazz Vocalist." Her debut album, *WomanChild* (2013), received a Grammy nomination. Her following releases, *For One to Love* (2015), *Dreams and Daggers* (2017), and *The Window* (2018) all won Grammy Awards for "Best Jazz Vocal Album."

Critics praise Ms. McLorin Salvant's gifts as an interpreter of popular song. "The marvel of Cécile McLorin Salvant is the complexity of her point of view as an artist," writes David Hajdu in the pages of *The Nation*. "Like most jazz and cabaret singers, she works in a milieu that is

essentially interpretive... But she chooses her material so astutely, and interprets it so adroitly, that the songs come across like the personal expression of an idiosyncratic individual with an utterly contemporary sensibility.” She inhabits the inner life of a lyric, shading them with subtle, often ironic poignancies through the use of vocal inflections, improvisations, varied phrasing, and articulation. Fred Kaplan of the *New Yorker* praises her “emotional range” and her ability to “inhabit different personas in the course of a song, sometimes even a phrase — delivering the lyrics in a faithful spirit while also commenting on them, mining them for unexpected drama and wit.” In Ms. McLorin Salvant’s own words, “I think there is a lot of room for improvisation and surprise while still singing the lyric, and when that is successfully done it can express a great deal of emotion and reveal the different layers in the music and in the text all at once.”

A 34-year-old classically trained pianist and composer, **Aaron Diehl** has made an indelible mark on the jazz world over the last 15 years. While showing a rare affinity for early jazz and mid-20th century “third-stream” music, his latest evolution comes as he begins to tackle modern classical works, having performed George Gershwin’s piano and orchestra works with the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Minnesota Orchestra.

Mr. Diehl has collaborated with living masters ranging from jazz greats Wynton Marsalis and Benny Golson to 20th-century classical titan Philip Glass. He has established himself as one of the preeminent interpreters of the Great American Songbook in his working trio and as musical director and arranger for

the remarkable vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant.

The *New York Times* jazz critics have extolled Mr. Diehl’s “melodic precision, harmonic erudition, and elegant restraint,” while the same outlet’s classical critics have noted, “Mr. Diehl play[s] magnificently.”

A graduate of Juilliard, Mr. Diehl was named the 2011 Cole Porter Fellow by American Pianists Association, in 2014 became the youngest ever Monterey Jazz Festival Commission Artist, and has released two critically acclaimed albums on the Mack Avenue Records label. He was the music director for Jazz at Lincoln Center’s 2014-15 New Orleans Songbook series and in 2017 participated in Jazz in July’s “The Art of Tatum,” honoring one of his primary piano idols, Art Tatum.

When he isn’t on tour or recording, Mr. Diehl enjoys spending time in the sky. A licensed pilot, one of his favorite planes to fly is the Beechcraft Bonanza.

UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's performances mark **Cécile McLorin Salvant**'s third and fourth performances and **Aaron Diehl**'s second and third performances under UMS auspices, following their UMS debuts in February 2017 with pianist Adam Birnbaum in *Jelly and George* in the Michigan Theater. Ms. McLorin Salvant most recently appeared under UMS auspices in April 2019 in the Michigan Theater with the Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour.

**THANK YOU TO SUPPORTERS OF THIS EVENING'S
PERFORMANCES**

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MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 2/16 Angélique Kidjo: *Remain in Light*
- 3/13 Tarek Yamani Trio
- 3/14 Hélène Grimaud

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 2/14 UMS 101: Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán
(Hill Auditorium Mezzanine Lobby, 6:00–7:30 pm)
Paid registration required at <http://bit.ly/UMSClasses> (case sensitive).
- 2/21 Post-Performance Artist Q&A: Dorrance Dance
Power Center
Must have a ticket to that evening's performance of Dorrance Dance to attend.
- 2/22 You Can Dance: Dorrance Dance
(Ann Arbor YMCA, 400 W. Washington Street, 1:30 pm)
Registration opens 45 minutes prior to the start of the event.
- 3/13 UMS 101: Tarek Yamani Trio
(Michigan League, Michigan Room, 6:00–7:30 pm)
Paid registration required at <http://bit.ly/UMSClasses> (case sensitive).

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.