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JOYCE DIDONATO BRINGS MUSIC OF WAR AND PEACE TO BING CONCERT HALL ON DECEMBER 2

This latest touring project was the singer’s response to the Paris attacks of last November

Stanford, CA, November 10, 2016—In what she describes as her “most personal project to date,” the Grammy–winning mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato found harmony through the music of war and peace. Entitled In War and Peace, this lovingly curated collection of Baroque opera arias pairs DiDonato with the early music ensemble Il Pomo d’Oro under Maxim Emelyanychev. The album-meets-tour kicks off in the Bay Area next month with performances at Stanford University’s Bing Concert Hall (Dec. 2) and UC Berkeley’s Zellerbach Hall (Dec. 4).

Her ambitions for this theatrical presentation, which features lighting, choreography and Vivienne Westwood-designed stage costumes, are substantial. She hopes it will inspire audiences to find an answer to a question she poses: “In the midst of chaos, how do you find peace?”

Originally intended to be an entirely different program of arias by neglected and little-known composers, the project grew out of DiDonato’s horror at the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. While doing her musical research, at the same she was waiting for messages from friends and colleagues in the aftermath, she had an epiphany that led her to scrap the idea.

“How could I devote immense, intensive personal and professional resources to this project and dare to bring it to 20 cities,” wrote DiDonato in The Guardian, “when the music sitting in front of me felt – apologies to these fine composers – like a gimmick while the world around me continued to surge out of control? And then, from the pile of my own music, Dido majestically appeared. And then Sesto, in his war-torn desperation; and then the prisoner Almirena’s haunting ‘Lascia ch’io pianga’ emerged, almost begging to be heard.”
DiDonato’s Paris-based record label agreed to the last-minute change. The result was a new album around war and peace with arias by well-known composers such as Handel, Monteverdi and Purcell.

She says her aim is to “steer conversation and discourse, to help all of us find peace in our lives in a dynamic way.” She adds, “As I have tried to convey in this selection of music, the power to bravely tip the scales towards peace lies firmly within every single one of us.”

In her search for peace and harmony, DiDonato did not entirely desert her rare-arias musicological quest. The album includes three world premiere recordings of works that will also be featured in her concert program: a “War” aria from Andromaca, by the Neapolitan composer Leonardo Leo, and two “Peace” arias from the operas Attila and Attilio Regolo, by another Neapolitan, Niccolò Jommelli.

Fuelled by these arias, DiDonato is committed to engaging music lovers around the world. She invites people to participate in the dialogue about finding peace and harmony by using the hashtag #TalkPeace on social media. DiDonato has already received responses to the project’s central question (“In the midst of chaos, how do you find peace?”) from prisoners, refugees, veterans, homeless people, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, actors David Hyde Pierce, F. Murray Abraham, Sir Patrick Stewart and Dame Judi Dench and designer Vivienne Westwood, among others.

For more information on the project and the Stanford Live concert visit, live.stanford.edu.

TICKETS
Tickets for Joyce DiDonato and Il Pomo d’Oro, presented by Stanford Live on December 2, range from $30-$95 for adults (subject to change) and are $15 for all current Stanford students. Tickets are available at the Bing Concert Hall Ticket Office, by phone at 650-724-2464 or online at live.stanford.edu.

VENUE INFORMATION
Bing Concert Hall is located on the Stanford University campus at 327 Lasuen Street on the corner of Lasuen and Campus Dr. Parking on campus is free of charge after 4:00 PM and on weekends at all times, and may be found in the Galvez Lot across Campus Drive from Bing Concert Hall.
ABOUT STANFORD LIVE

Stanford Live presents a wide range of the finest performances from around the world fostering a vibrant learning community and providing distinctive experiences through the performing arts. With its home at Bing Concert Hall, Stanford Live is simultaneously a public square, a sanctuary and a lab, drawing on the breadth and depth of Stanford University to connect performance to the significant issues, ideas and discoveries of our time.

CALENDAR EDITORS:

What: Joyce DiDonato and Il Pomo d'Oro
With Maxim Emelyanychev, conductor

When: Friday, December 2, 7:30 p.m.

Program: In War and Peace: Harmony Through Music

Where: Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen Street, Stanford University

Tickets: $30-$95 (subject to change)

Description: Joined at Bing Concert Hall by the Italian period-instrument ensemble Il Pomo d'Oro, the renowned American mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato devotes her dramatic power to a program that explores the themes of war and peace in baroque arias by Purcell, Handel, Monteverdi and others.

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