

The Metropolitan Opera

Kathleen Battle Returns to the Metropolitan Opera November 13, 2016 With A Recital of Spirituals, Accompanied by Choir and Piano

The legendary soprano will sing music inspired by the Underground Railroad, joined by pianist Joel Martin, choir and special guests.

New York, NY (April 4, 2016) – Legendary soprano **Kathleen Battle**, who starred in more than 220 Met performances over the course of her career, will make her first appearance at the Met in more than 20 years with the recital *Kathleen Battle: Underground Railroad – A Spiritual Journey* on Sunday, November 13 at 4 p.m. Battle will sing a recital of Spirituals inspired by the journey to freedom along the Underground Railroad, the 19th-century network of safe houses that allowed African-Americans to escape from slavery. She will be joined by pianist **Joel Martin, choir and special guests.**

“I’m thrilled to bring *Underground Railroad – A Spiritual Journey* to New York for the first time,” Ms. Battle said. “Spirituals have the power to uplift and to heal, and we certainly need that in today’s world. This is a program which brings together my musical background and my cultural heritage, in the acoustical splendor of the Met.”

Ms. Battle has performed the program in a number of cities around the country. Met General Manager **Peter Gelb** suggested that Ms. Battle bring the program to the Met, and after spending an hour onstage for an acoustic test last December, she agreed.

“Ever since I was appointed to the Met, I’ve been trying to convince Kathy to return to the opera house,” Gelb said. “She is in great voice and this will be an important event for the Met and the public.”

The concert program will feature Ms. Battle in numerous well-known Spirituals, gospel and traditional pieces, including “Lord, How Come Me Here?,” “Go Down, Moses,” “Wade in the Water,” “Roll, Jordan, Roll,” “City Called Heaven,” “Over My Head,” “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” “I Don’t Feel No-Ways Tired,” “Farther Along,” “Fix Me, Jesus,” “Balm in Gilead,” “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn You Me Roun’,” “Let Us Break Bread Together,” “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand,” “Gospel Train,” “Every Time I Feel the Spirit,” and the anthem “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

Tickets to the recital range from \$25 to \$200 and are currently available exclusively to Met subscribers and patrons by phone at (212) 362-6000 or online at www.metopera.org. Single tickets will go on sale on Sunday, June 26.

Kathleen Battle made her Met debut in 1977 as the Shepherd in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and went on to sing 224 performances of 14 roles with the company. She gave acclaimed performances in a varied repertory that included numerous roles by Mozart—Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Blondchen in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and Despina in *Così fan tutte*—and Richard Strauss—Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Zdenka in *Arabella*—as well as Rosina in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Elvira in his *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Adina in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* (starring opposite Luciano Pavarotti), Cleopatra in the first-ever Met performances of Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, and Sophie in Massenet's *Werther*. She has also performed at the world's major opera houses and concert halls, as well as a recitalist with major orchestras and performance venues around the world, including a celebrated 1990 concert of spirituals with fellow soprano Jessye Norman at Carnegie Hall. She has also appeared in solo recital at the opera houses of London's Covent Garden, La Scala (Milan, Italy) and Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires).

She has performed *Underground Railroad – A Spiritual Journey* at the Detroit Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Philadelphia's Kimmel Center, Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall, UCLA's Royce Hall, and Bethesda's Strathmore Center, among others.

Kathleen Battle is the recipient of an Emmy Award for her performance at the Met's Opening Night Gala, as well as the Laurence Olivier Award in London for her portrayal of Zerbinetta in Covent Garden's new production of *Ariadne auf Naxos* by Richard Strauss. She has received five Grammy Awards, including three for Best Classical Vocalist.

###

Contacts:

Lee Abrahamian / Sam Neuman

Metropolitan Opera

(212) 870-7457

labrahamian@metopera.org / sneuman@metopera.org