



BACH
to school

**VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY
LISTENING GUIDE**

WFMT General Manager George Preston interviews:

Lunga Eric Hallam, tenor

Chris Reynolds, pianist

and

Dan Novak, Director

The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at
Lyric Opera of Chicago

Featured music:

A te, o cara from I Puritani

by Vincenzo Bellini

Come By Here, Good Lord

Traditional Spiritual arranged by Damien Sneed

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About the Listening Guide

WFMT'S Bach to School virtual assembly features the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. WFMT General Manager George Preston will interview Lunga Eric Hallam, tenor; Chris Reynolds, pianist; and Dan Novak, Director of the Ryan Opera Center. The virtual performances include *A te, o cara* from *I Puritani* by Vincenzo Bellini and *Come By Here, Good Lord* arranged by Damien Sneed.

WFMT's Bach to School music donation program helps teachers build the foundation for understanding classical music for the youngest members of our community by donating instruments, online resources, and sets of classical music recordings to classrooms in the Chicago area and beyond.

Today's Program

A te, o cara from *I Puritani*

By Vincenzo Bellini

Lunga Eric Hallam, tenor

Chris Reynolds, piano

WATCH: [Video by WFMT](#)

Performed December 13, 2021 at the Salme Harju Steinberg Fine Arts Center Recital Hall.
Steinberg Fine Arts Center, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835) was the quintessential *bel canto* composer and was known for his long-flowing melodic lines. *Bel canto* means beautiful singing in Italian and was the dominant style of singing in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1835, Bellini composed the opera *I Puritani*, which the audience and journalists hailed as a "genuine triumph." *I Puritani* is a historical drama that takes place in 17th century England. Lord Arturo Talbot and Elvira, a passionate young couple, find themselves caught up in a conflict between opposing political parties. After the opera's premiere in Paris, Bellini wrote to his friend Francesco Florimo sharing the following report of the opera's reception: "The French had all gone mad; there were such noise and such shouts that they themselves were astonished at being so carried away... In a word, my dear Florimo, it was an unheard of thing, and since Saturday, Paris has spoken of it in amazement." Bellini died in France at the age of 33, nine months after the premiere performance of *I Puritani*.

In 1955, *I Puritani* reappeared in America at Lyric Opera of Chicago with star performers Maria Callas and Giuseppe Di Stefano.



A te, o cara from *I Puritani*

By Vincenzo Bellini

Lyrics:

A te, o cara, amor talora
Mi guidò furtivo e in pianto;
Or mi guida a te d'accanto
Tra la gioia e l'esultar.
Al brillar di sì bell'ora,
Se rammento il mio tormento
Si raddoppia il mio contento,
M'è più caro il palpar.

English Translation:

To you, oh dear one, love at times
lead me furtively and in tears;
now it guides me to your side
in joy and exaltation.
At the radiance of such a beautiful hour
if I renew my torment,
it redoubles my happiness,
'tis more dear the (heart's) beating.

**"There are extremely long melodies as no one else had ever made before."
—Giuseppe Verdi (praising Bellini's music)**

Come By Here, Good Lord

Traditional Spiritual arranged by Damien Sneed

Lunga Eric Hallam, tenor

Chris Reynolds, piano

WATCH: [Video by WFMT](#)

Performed December 13, 2021 at the Salme Harju Steinberg Fine Arts Center Recital Hall,
Steinberg Fine Arts Center, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Come By Here, Good Lord is a traditional African American spiritual that is more commonly known as "Kum ba yah." It was sung in the Gullah culture of the islands off South Carolina and Georgia, with ties to enslaved West Africans. The first known recording, of someone known only as H. Wylie singing in the Gullah dialect, was recorded by folklorist Robert Winslow Gordon in 1926. The song enjoyed broader popularity during the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s and was originally an appeal to God to come and help those in need.

Damien Sneed, the arranger of *Come By Here, Good Lord*, is an award-winning artist who excels in classical, gospel, jazz, and contemporary music. Damien Sneed is a pianist, vocalist, organist, composer, conductor, arranger, producer, and arts educator whose work spans multiple genres. Sneed is also a Sphinx Medal of Excellence recipient. In January 2020, he embarked on his 40-city North American tour, "We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., featuring Damien Sneed."

VISIT: damiensneed.com



About the Performers

Lunga Eric Hallam is a second-year tenor with Lyric Opera's Ryan Center, and was born and raised in Khayelitsha, Western Cape, South Africa. There he founded he founded a nonprofit organization called Phenomenal Opera Voices the same year he enrolled at the University of Cape Town College



Lunga Eric Hallam

of Music, where he received his diploma and postgraduate (with honors) degrees. Recent engagements as a Young Artist at Cape Town Opera include Tebaldo in *I capuleti e i montecchi*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Roberto in *Maria Stuarda*, as well as Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* at Cape Town Conservatory. He was featured as part of the 2017 Harare International Festival of the Arts in Zimbabwe. Hallam competed as a semifinalist in the 2019 Neue Stimmen International Singing Competition and the 2019 Voice of South Africa International Singing Competition. Chicago appearances include the Harris Theater's *Beyond the Aria* series alongside Joyce DiDonato. In Lyric's 2020/21 virtual programming, Hallam was featured in *Lawrence Brownlee and Friends: The Next*

Chapter, Creating The Factotum, Sole e Amore, Magical Music Around the World, and Rising Stars in Concert. For the 2021/22 season, he performed in *Sunday in the Park with Lyric's Rising Stars* and as Adult Nathan in *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*.

Chris Reynolds is a pianist and a second-year member of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has made a name for himself as both a soloist and a collaborator. Currently a doctoral candidate at The Juilliard School, he recently performed at Lincoln Center Theater

for Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage's chamber opera *Intimate Apparel*. Other performance venues include Bayreuth, Carnegie Hall, Tanglewood, WQXR, the Kyoto Summer Music Festival, and National Sawdust. A two-time winner of the Juilliard Vocal Arts Honors Recital Auditions, Reynolds has been a fellow at SongFest and Aspen, as well as a Schwab Vocal Rising Star as part of the New York Festival of Song Emerging Artist Series. He has worked at the Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center Theater as an opera coach/répétiteur and has served on the faculties of the Internationale Meistersinger Akademie, William Paterson University, and the Mostly Modern Festival. Reynolds holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School.

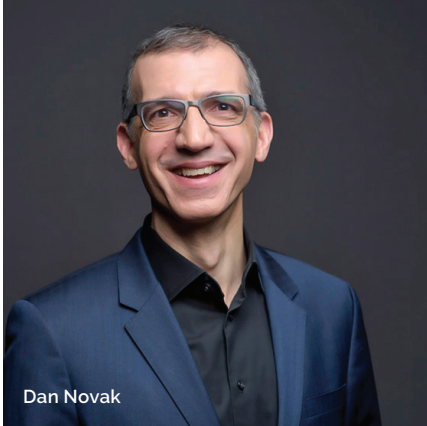


Chris Reynolds

For Lyric's 2020/21 virtual programming, the pianist appeared in *Lawrence Brownlee and Friends: The Next Chapter, Master Classes with Sir Andrew Davis, Pasi3n Latina, Sole e Amore, Magical Music Around the World, and Rising Stars in Concert*. In the company's 2021/22 season, Reynolds appeared in *Sunday in the Park with Lyric's Rising Stars* in addition to preparing *Macbeth* as a member of Lyric's music staff.



Dan Novak was named Director of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago in April of 2013, having served as Manager since 2000. In 2006 his position with the program was elevated to senior management level when he assumed responsibility for all executive duties



and began assisting with artistic decisions. Novak's career at Lyric Opera of Chicago, of which the Center is an affiliate, began in 1989. The first decade of his tenure involved positions with the Development and Ticket Departments, most recently the Assistant Director of Development for Chapter Activities. An Illinois native, Novak is a graduate of Northwestern University, where he earned a degree in Music Education with distinction. He serves as a member of the Advisory Board of the Shoshana Foundation as well as an adjudicator for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and other voice competitions.

About the Ryan Opera Center

The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center is Lyric Opera of Chicago's preeminent artist development program that nurtures the talents of some of the most promising operatic artists of each generation. The program's Ensemble members earn their coveted spots by successfully auditioning among more than 400 artists worldwide. Its alumni are among the dominant names in opera today. Donor generosity ensures continued unparalleled training, performance experience, and professional readiness of Ensemble members. This highly competitive program, established in 1974, is honored to enjoy the support of acclaimed soprano Renée Fleming as Advisor, along with full time staff Director Dan Novak, Music Director Craig Terry, and Director of Vocal Studies Julia Faulkner.

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