

BLUEPOINT HOSPITALITY

GRAMMY Artist in Residence

*The "Gabriela Montero at Prager" Series Brings
GRAMMY-Winning Artists from Around the World to Easton, Maryland*

Pianist-composer, **Gabriela Montero**, started her studies earlier than most – at just four years old – making her solo debut with an orchestra in her home country of Venezuela at age seven. She went on to receive a scholarship to attend school in the U.S., and later became a graduate and fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in London. Montero has showcased her phenomenal musicality and rare improvisational ability internationally – from Carnegie Hall to the 2008 Presidential Inauguration of Barack Obama. Come this fall, Montero will be performing, along with a selection of GRAMMY-winning musical artists, as part of the **Gabriela Montero at Prager** series in the newly restored **Ebenezer Theater**, Easton, Maryland. Comprised of eight concerts, beginning **September 2022** and continuing through the **summer of 2023**, Montero and some of the most influential musicians of modern times – representing China, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Ireland, Cuba and the United States – will bring sounds from around the world to Easton.

Season One of the series will feature Montero and seven of the music world's brightest stars, including esteemed talents like **Joshua Bell**, the GRAMMY-winning and Emmy-nominated violinist. Bell was selected to play for the first musical mission to Cuba commissioned by President Obama to celebrate the renewed cultural diplomacy between the U.S. and Cuba; he was named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by *Musical America*, and his genre-crossing collaborations – with musicians like Sting and Chick Corea – along with contributions to the Academy Award-winning film, *Red Violin*, have made the Indiana native a musical legend. **Yuja Wang**, the Beijing pianist and the youngest of the visiting artists, is known for her charismatic stage presence and her fashionable and bold attire that reflects the energy of her performances. In addition to her four GRAMMY nominations, Wang has been recognized with Gramophone's prestigious "Young Artist of the Year" award, and the *Musical America* "Artist of the Year" award; she's a fresh and youthful voice in the classical world. **Paquito D'Rivera**, with 14 Grammy awards to his name, discovered his love for the saxophone and clarinet early in his home country of Cuba, performing at age 10 with the National Theater Orchestra in Havana. Known for his ability to blend Latin jazz and classical music, he was honored with the National Medal for the Arts by President George W. Bush. **Larisa Martinez**, born and raised in Puerto Rico, joined the previously mentioned artist Joshua Bell in Cuba as part of the delegation sent by President Obama. The Soprano singer has toured with tenor Andrea Bocelli; she won the Metropolitan Opera's National Council Audition in Puerto Rico; and her talents were showcased on the Emmy-nominated PBS special "*Live From Lincoln Center, Seasons of Cuba.*" Regarded as Ireland's finest tenor, **Anthony Kearns** toured with the acclaimed group, The Irish Tenors. Kearns performed during several of President Obama's Inauguration events and he regularly makes time to sing in support of important causes such as musical education and autism awareness. **Vanessa Perez** is a pianist; at age 11, she was invited to make her concert debut in Caracas, Venezuela. Today, Perez is the performance partner of actor Bill Murray, and recently played a major role alongside Murray in the concert documentary, "*New Worlds: Cradle of Civilization.*" Her presentation at the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, was filmed by director Andrew Muscato and became an official selection of the 2021 Cannes Film Festival. She was interviewed by Jane Pauley on *CBS Sunday Morning* and has performed on the *Stephen Colbert Show*. The final artist joining Montero is **Marc-André Hamelin**, a Canadian musician who began playing piano at the age of five. Hamelin is a recording artist for Hyperion Records; with a discography that spans more than 70 albums, he has nearly 30 compositions to his name. Hamelin has received seven Juno Awards and 11 GRAMMY nominations.

Ensuring inclusivity, up to 20 seats at each performance will be allocated at no cost to underserved communities through the **Access to Excellence** ticket program. In addition to the performances, Montero is introducing three new programs to Easton. **Back to School with Gabriela** brings the world-renowned artists to community youth,

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with showcases at Talbot County Public Schools the day before each of their performances at the Prager Family Auditorium. The **Gabriela Montero Piano Lab** offers year-round mentoring to the next generation of concert pianists from across the globe. She'll be leading live, digital instruction to nine piano fellows, each of impeccable talent and skill. The 90-minute **Open Door Piano Lab Sessions** offered throughout the year will allow the Easton community exclusive access to observe Montero's mentoring work.

Given Paul Prager's proclivity for restoring historic buildings in Easton, Maryland, it comes as no surprise that he is behind the ambitious revival of the **Ebenezer Theater**, within the **Prager Family Center for the Arts**. The historic building of 1856 was built to house the Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal Church. Sold in the mid-20th century, it was the headquarters of the Historical Society of Talbot County, which initiated the transition from a place of worship to an auditorium. When Prager, as principal of Bluepoint Hospitality, acquired the property in 2014, he created something almost as spiritual as the original building - a performing arts venue. At the Ebenezer Theater, Bluepoint Hospitality has created a rich atmosphere of Victorian Gothic and Aesthetic Movement design, taking its cue from the original features like stained-glass windows and gothic arches. Period wallpapers from Bradbury & Bradbury embody the high ideals of mid-19th century interior design. The pressed-tin ceiling has been transformed by 24-karat gold leaf, hand-applied by Maryland artist Kelly Walker, who also created a dramatic celestial canopy over the stage. Thanks to the latest 21st-century technology, the auditorium's acoustics now set the stage for memorable performances. Completing the Prager Family Center for the Arts is Zachariah Hall, adjacent to the theater, adding space for programs that present literary, visual, and performing arts for the enrichment of the community. Bluepoint Hospitality looks forward to 'sharing the stage' with *Gabriela Montero at Prager*.

For further details and scheduling of the eight select concerts at Ebenezer Theater, please visit the website of www.bluepointhospitality.com.

For More Information:

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