



**MARLISSA HUDSON, SOPRANO**



**MARVIN MILLS, ORGAN**

### *Biographies*

American soprano **Marliisa Hudson** has been described as a “superb lyric coloratura” (St. Louis Post-Dispatch). At home both on the operatic and concert stage, Ms. Hudson made her professional debut while a student, performing *Summertime* from **Porgy and Bess** with the Baltimore Symphony Pops Orchestra under the baton of Marvin Hamlisch. She later performed the entire role of Bess with Union Avenue Opera in St. Louis. Her other acclaimed role is Zerbinetta in Strauss’ **Ariadne auf Naxos**, which she performed with The Summer Opera Theatre Company (DC). Her performances earned glowing reviews in the both the Washington Post and the Baltimore Sun, which described her as “an endearing Zerbinetta ... [who] nailed the pyrotechnic aria, "Grossmachtige Prinzessin," in bright, sure tones.”

Most recently Ms. Hudson completed her debut CD, "Libera", published through African Musical Arts, Inc. and available through iTunes and Amazon.com. Sarah Bryan Miller of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch noted that "Hudson sings (them) all in a rich, expressive voice that doesn't stint on high notes, with clear diction and true feeling." Mark Hayes, noted classical music composer, commented that "I love how Marliisa has interpreted my arrangements. She sings them like she has lived them...her pitch is impeccable and her voice shows amazing flexibility and control."

Ms. Hudson received her formal training at Duke University and the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. She earned awards for music at both schools, including a Peabody Career Development Grant.

As a concert soloist, Ms. Hudson has collaborated with such esteemed organizations as the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Pops Orchestra, National Philharmonic Orchestra, Choralis, St. Louis Civic Orchestra, and the Prince George's Philharmonic. Recitals are a definitive niche for Ms. Hudson, and she has performed as a featured recitalist across the continental U.S. and St. Croix US VI.

For more information regarding upcoming performances, please visit [www.marlissahudson.com](http://www.marlissahudson.com) or follow her on twitter: [www.twitter.com/marlissahudson](http://www.twitter.com/marlissahudson).

**Marvin Mills**, a native of Philadelphia, is organist at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Kensington, Maryland. He has been music director of the acclaimed National Spiritual Ensemble, and guest artist with the Ritz Chamber Players, based in Jacksonville, Florida. Previous positions include Associate Minister of Music at National City Christian Church, Director of Music at All Souls Church, Unitarian, and University Organist at Howard University, all in Washington, DC.

Active with the District of Columbia Chapter of the American Guild of Organists since 1984, he has served as dean (1990-1992), board member, Foundation trustee, Regional Convention secretary, and chairman for regional and chapter competitions, exemplifying his commitment to the mission of the Guild and his belief in the expressive power of the organ as an instrument for use in worship and concert. He has also participated in the Guild's *Pipe Organ Encounters* for Youth and Adults as teacher, clinician and recitalist, helping all ages to experience various aspects of pipe organ study.

Mr. Mills has performed for numerous chapters of The American Guild of Organists and been a featured recitalist at several of its national conventions. He opened the 1989 Wendell P. Whalum Concert Series at Morehouse College, performing for the entire student body. Presented in recital by the Washington National Cathedral in observance of Black History Month 1989, he was invited back for its 1995 and 2002 Summer Festival Series.

As clinician, he has given workshops for the Unitarian Universalists Musician's Network, the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, Association of Disciples Musicians, and at the regional and chapter levels of the American Guild of Organists spanning topics from the Negro Spiritual and organ music of Black Composers, to hymn playing, organ accompaniment and organ repertoire. He participated in a daylong seminar on the *Sights and Sounds of the Pipe Organ* sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute, focusing on the art of organ transcription using Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* as a model.

He has performed throughout the United States in such places as The Academy of Music, Philadelphia, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and The Barns-Wolf Trap Farm Park in addition to colleges and universities. He has appeared as guest artist with numerous choral groups including the Concert Artists of Baltimore, the Washington Bach Consort, the Cathedral Choral Society, Fairfax Choral Society, MasterSingers of Wilmington (DE), and the Eastern Michigan University Chamber Choir. In the spring of 1992 Mr. Mills performed the complete organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach in a weekly series of fourteen programs on the 96 rank Rieger (Austria) organ at All Souls Church, Unitarian. He made his west coast debut at the

Spreckles Organ Pavilion International Organ Summer Concert Series in Balboa Park, San Diego and his New York City recital debut in July 1993 at the Riverside Church, returning in 2003 and 2011. Concerto appearances include the Pittsburgh Symphony with conductor Isaiah Jackson, the Johns Hopkins Symphony and the Peabody Symphony. He has also performed with the Jacksonville Symphony in concertos by Handel, Rheinberger and Jongen as well as Hindemith's *Concerto for Organ and Orchestra*. During the inaugural festival of the Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ, (built by Dobson Organ Builders, Op. 76), in Verizon Hall of the Kimmel Center, he was the first of five recitalists for the Saturday marathon.

Mr. Mills has been a featured artist at the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival as keyboard artist (harpsichord/piano/organ), chamber musician and choral conductor - preparing the Festival Chorus for major works such as: Haydn's *Creation*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Handel's *Samson* and Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and many Bach cantatas. Active as a vocal coach/accompanist, he has worked with numerous singers and instrumentalists throughout the mid-Atlantic region. He can be heard as arranger and accompanist on a disc of spirituals with mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves, *Angels Watching Over Me*. His song for high voice and piano, *On Virtue*, was commissioned by the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine for its *Poets Corner* celebrating 18th century poet Phyllis Wheatley. In February 2010 he made his theatrical conducting debut with the Washington Savoyards in its production of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*.