



**MASTEROICES OFFERS SONGS FOR A SUMMER NIGHT,
A FREE OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE ON JUNE 8 AT WATERLINE SQUARE PARK
(Rain Date on June 9)**

**CONCERT FEATURES WORLD PREMIERE BY COMPOSER AND VOCALIST TARIQ AL-SABIR,
ALONG WITH GUEST ARTIST SHEREEN PIMENTEL AND ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S**



New York, NY, May 5, 2022 — **MasterVoices** concludes its 2021-22 season celebrating its 80th anniversary on **Wednesday, June 8** with *Songs for a Summer Night*, a free outdoor performance at the new Waterline Square Park on the Upper West Side. The concert features several new arrangements demonstrating how the sounds of summer delight and inspire. Artistic Director **Ted Sperling** leads the **MasterVoices Chorus** and the **Orchestra of St. Luke's** with guests, soprano **Shereen Pimentel**, who played Maria in the recent Broadway revival of *West Side Story*, and composer and tenor **Tariq Al-Sabir**. Drawing from composers from the Renaissance to the present day, the program includes the **world premiere** of *Summers Are Growing Longer*, a new work by Mr. Al-Sabir, commissioned by MasterVoices.

Said Mr. Sperling, "It has been thrilling to be with a live audience again this season. What a pleasure it will be to share a beautiful June evening with our community as we close our 80th anniversary season with a program that evokes the sounds, smells and emotions of summer, as imagined by some of our greatest composers, and to hear the contemporary musical ideas of Tariq Al-Sabir inspired by the sounds of summer in New York."

The program opens with Mendelssohn's Scherzo and Song with Choir from his suite of music for "A Midsummer Night's Dream." And what is summer without the song of crickets? The chorus performs the playful Italian frottola *El Grillo* ("The Cricket"), by Renaissance composer Josquin des Prez. Written very likely for his friend Carlo Grillo, it is an early example of text painting in music, when the music matches the words being sung.

Broadway composers are represented by Stephen Schwartz and Charles Strouse, Frank Loesser and Mr. Spering's arrangement of Sondheim's *Night Music Waltzes* from "A Little Night Music." The program also includes three songs by Ricky Ian Gordon: *New Moon*, set to a poem by Langston Hughes; *Joy*, written for soprano Harolyn Blackwell; and *Summer*. Next is Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer 1915*, his musical setting of a poem by James Agee of the same title, which served as the preface to Agee's 1948 novel *A Death in the Family*. This is followed by two songs from *Les nuits d'été*, a song cycle by Berlioz set to six poems by Théophile Gautier. The evening ends with the world premiere of the new commissioned piece by Mr. Al-Sabir.

With *Songs for a Summer Night*, MasterVoices is a proud participant in the #FestivalofNY – a city-wide celebration of all the things that make us New Yorkers.



[Songs for a Summer Night](#)

Wednesday, June 8, 2022, 7 pm at [Waterline Square Park](#) (60th Street and Freedom Place South)

(Rain date: June 9, 7 pm, same location)

MasterVoices

Ted Spering, Artistic Director and Conductor

Orchestra of St. Luke's

Shereen Pimentel, soprano

Tariq Al-Sabir, tenor

Program to include:

Mendelssohn: Scherzo from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in E major, Op. 21

Mendelssohn: Song with Choir (from "A Midsummer Night's Dream")

des Prez: *El Grillo*

Schwartz/Strouse: *Blame it on the Summer Night* (from "Rags")

Loesser: *Song of a Summer Night* (from "The Most Happy Fella")

Ricky Ian Gordon: Three songs, *New Moon*, *Summer*, and *Joy*

Barber: *Knoxville: Summer 1915*

Berlioz: Excerpts from *Les nuits d'été* (*Summer Nights*), *Villanelle* and *Le spectre de la rose*

Sondheim: *Night Music Waltz Suite*, arr. Ted Spering

Tariq Al-Sabir: *Summers Are Growing Longer* (**World Premiere Commission**)

Tickets: The concert is **free**, no reservation needed. A limited number of first-come, first-served seats will be available and concertgoers are encouraged to bring blankets or lawn-chairs.

More About the Guest Artists

Soprano **Shereen Pimentel**, a 2020 graduate of the Juilliard School, made her MasterVoices debut in last season's online premiere of Adam Guettel's song cycle, *Myths and Hymns*. She made her Broadway debut as young Nala in *The Lion King*. She was an Outer Critics Circle honoree for Best Actress in a Musical for her performance as Maria in the 2020 revival of *West Side Story*. Other credits include *Road Show* (Encores! Off-Center) and the *John Mulvaney and the Sack Lunch Bunch* special for Netflix. She sang in the final

episode of Playbill's online *Holiday Concert Series* last December. This May, she will play the role of Rapunzel in the Encores! production of *Into the Woods* at New York City Center.

Composer, Vocalist, Producer and Music Director **Tariq Al-Sabir** has performed and premiered commissioned works at The Public Theater, Lincoln Center, National Sawdust, MoMA and Columbia University's Wallach Art Gallery. He nationally and internationally premiered the roles of Richard Moss and Travis Douglass in *Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower*, an opera by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon. Al-Sabir's multimedia song cycle #UNWANTED, conceived during the 2018 SUITE/Space residency with the Mabou Mines Theater Company, premiered to the world at The Shed in 2019. Al-Sabir made his Los Angeles Philharmonic debut in the new production of Meredith Monk's ATLAS directed by Yuval Sharon and is collaborating with Monk on her new evening-length performance with the working title Indra's Net. In 2021 he served as music director for *Rainbird*, a new opera by Mallory Catlett and Aaron Siegel, at Experiments in Opera in Brooklyn. He is writing a three-act opera for Harlem Stage as a part of its 2022 WaterWorks Emerging Artists program.

About MasterVoices

MasterVoices (formerly The Collegiate Chorale) was founded in 1941 by legendary American choral conductor Robert Shaw. Under the artistic direction of Tony Award winner Ted Sperling since 2013, the group is known for its versatility and a repertoire that ranges from choral masterpieces and operas in concert to operettas and musical theater. Season concerts feature a volunteer chorus of 100+ members from all walks of life, alongside a diverse roster of world-class soloists from across the musical spectrum, including Julia Bullock, Dove Cameron, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Renée Fleming, John Holiday, Jennifer Holliday, Norm Lewis, Victoria Clark, and Kelli O'Hara. Under Sperling's direction the group has created cross-disciplinary collaborations with such diverse creative minds as *Vogue* Editor-at-Large Hamish Bowles, fashion designer Zac Posen, Silk Road visual artist Kevork Mourad, illustrator Manik Choksi, stage designer Doug Fitch, and choreographers Doug Varone and Andrew Palermo. Roger Rees was the group's Artistic Associate from 2003–2015, and in 2021 the group received a Drama League Award nomination for its multi-genre digital concert production, *Myths and Hymns*.

Known for its presentation of lesser-known artistic treasures such as Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*, and Tchaikovsky's *Maid of Orleans*, the group has received recent accolades for productions of rarely-heard works such as the 2018-19 season's *Lady in the Dark* by Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin, Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, the Gershwins' *Let 'Em Eat Cake*, and Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents's *Anyone Can Whistle*. They also commission and premiere new works; recent examples include choral works by Ricky Ian Gordon, Marisa Michelson, Tariq Al-Sabir, and Randall Eng.

As one of the country's first interracial and interfaith choruses, MasterVoices (as The Collegiate Chorale) performed at the opening of the United Nations and has sung and recorded under the batons of esteemed conductors including Serge Koussevitzky, Arturo Toscanini, and Leonard Bernstein, among others. It has been engaged by top-tier orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic and the Israel Philharmonic, and has appeared at the Verbier and Salzburg Festivals.

For more information, visit mastervoices.org. Connect with MasterVoices on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (@mastervoicesny).

About Ted Sperling

One of today's leading musical artists, Tony Award-winning Maestro Ted Sperling is a classically trained musician whose career has spanned from the concert hall and the opera house to the Broadway stage. Presently Artistic Director of MasterVoices, he has led such symphony orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Boston Pops, San Diego Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, the Iceland Symphony, Czech National Symphony, and BBC Concert Orchestra, as well as New York City Opera and Houston Grand Opera. Formerly Principal Conductor of the Westchester Philharmonic, Mr. Sperling is a multi-faceted artist also known for his work as orchestrator, singer, pianist, violinist, violist, director, and music director.

With MasterVoices, Maestro Sperling has led acclaimed productions of rarely-heard gems as both director and conductor. These include Kurt Weill's *The Firebrand of Florence*, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *The Road of Promise* (based on *The Eternal Road* and subsequently recorded on Navona Records), and the 2018-19 season's sold-out three-performance run of *Lady in the Dark* at New York City Center. Other notable productions with the group include Carnegie Hall performances of George and Ira Gershwin's satirical musicals *Of Thee I Sing* and *Let 'Em Eat Cake*, a reconstruction of Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, and *Song of Norway*; the New York City premieres of David Lang's *battle hymns* at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum; and Ricky Ian Gordon's operas *The Grapes of Wrath* at Carnegie Hall and *27* at New York City Center.

During the pandemic season of 2020-2021, Maestro Sperling spearheaded a filmed production of Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns* for MasterVoices, producing and music directing 24 short musical films and directing roughly half of them. This project was nominated for a Drama League Award, and featured over 100 artists collaborating remotely, including Renée Fleming, Take 6, Jennifer Holliday and Julia Bullock. Now that live performances are back, Maestro Sperling is supervising national and international productions of *My Fair Lady*, *The King and I*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. He has symphonic engagements in the US and Europe and continues to teach at NYU, conducting three different orchestras and training the next generation of Broadway musicians and conductors.

Sperling has conducted multiple concerts for PBS's *Live From Lincoln Center*, the American Songbook Series at Lincoln Center, and the *Lyrics and Lyricists* series at the 92nd Street Y. He conducted Audra McDonald in a double bill of *La Voix Humaine* and the world premiere of *Send: Who Are You? I Love You?* at the Houston Grand Opera. He won the 2005 Tony and Drama Desk Awards for his orchestrations of Adam Guettel's *The Light in the Piazza*, for which he was also Music Director.

In addition to his directing work with MasterVoices, Mr. Sperling's work as a stage director includes the world premieres of four critically acclaimed original musicals Off-Broadway—including *The Other Josh Cohen* and *See What I Wanna See*—and a noted production of *Lady in the Dark* at the Prince Theater in Philadelphia, starring Andrea Marcovicci. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale University, and received the Faculty Prize at The Juilliard School. He made his Broadway stage debut as Wallace Hartley in *Titanic* and appeared as Steve Allen in the finale of Season Two of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

Images from left to right: MasterVoices 2021-22 season visual created © Asia Pietrzyk, Tariq Al-Sabir © Monique Muse Dodd, Shereen Pimentel © Matthew Murphy.

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Press Contact:

Pascal Nadon

Pascal Nadon Communications

Phone: [646.234.7088](tel:646.234.7088)

Email: pascal@pascalnadon.com