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**WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
PRESENTS
THE SING FOR HOPE PRODUCTION OF
*THE LAST SORCERER (LE DERNIER SORCIER, 1867)***

A World Premiere 155 Years in the Making
featuring

Babatunde Akinboboye, Baritone

Monica Yunus, Soprano

Camille Zamora, Soprano

Julia Johnson, Soprano

Karim Sulayman, Tenor

Anastasia Malliaras, Soprano

Monique Coleman, Narrator

Los Angeles Children's Chorus' Chamber Singers

Fernando Malvar-Ruiz, Artistic Director

Musical Direction by Lucy Tucker Yates

Stage Direction by Sharyn Pirtle and Camille Zamora

Production Artwork and Design by K-12 Students from across the Greater Los Angeles Area

Friday, March 3, 2023, 7:30 pm
The Wallis' Bram Goldsmith Theater

(Beverly Hills, CA, March 1, 2023, UPDATED) – Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts presents the Sing for Hope production of ***THE LAST SORCERER (LE DERNIER SORCIER, 1867)***, a **World Premiere** 155 years in the making, on Friday, March 3, 2023, 7:30 pm, in The Wallis' Bram Goldsmith Theater. The production features baritone **Babatunde Akinboboye**, creator of [Hip Hopera](#), in the title role of the Sorcerer, Sing for Hope co-founder and soprano **Monica Yunus** as the bold young Stella, Sing for Hope co-founder and soprano **Camille Zamora** as the majestic Reine, soprano **Julia Johnson** as the dashing Prince Lelio, tenor **Karim Sulayman** as Perlimpinpin, soprano **Anastasia Malliaras** as Verveine, **Los Angeles Children's Chorus' Chamber Singers** (Fernando Malvar-Ruiz, Artistic Director) as the woodland Fairies. and acclaimed actress/activist **Monique Coleman** (star of Disney's *High School Musical*, among other hit shows) as Narrator. *The*

Last Sorcerer is directed by Zamora and Sing for Hope Director of Education Sharyn Pirtle with musical direction by Lucy Tucker Yates.

One hundred fifty-five years ahead of her time, Pauline García Viardot wrote her masterwork salon opera, *Le dernier sorcier (The last sorcerer)*, in 1867, centering themes of environmentalism and gender equality through a whimsical comic tale and poignant melodies. Written on a libretto by her lover, the great Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev, the work is a feminist eco-fable in operatic form. It was premiered to great acclaim with Viardot herself at the piano in her Baden-Baden villa, with her students filling the various colorful roles. After the work's premiere, the original vocal/piano manuscript was held in a private collection for over a century, vanishing without a trace, until acquired several years ago by Harvard Library, which gave Sing for Hope Co-Founder Camille Zamora permission to transcribe, publish, and produce it.

The Sing for Hope production of *The Last Sorcerer* at the Wallis marks the premiere of Viardot's work in its original form, with a stellar cast of internationally acclaimed artists. Zamora penned an English-language narration to be performed at The Wallis by Emmy-nominated actress Monique Coleman, punctuating the action story-book-style. A key aspect of the production design centers (as did Viardot's life) on the creativity of children and youth, and their power to effect positive change in the world around them. The production's design is created by local K-12 students from across the Greater Los Angeles area as part of Sing for Hope's UN Sustainable Development Goal Arts Curriculum. The students' designs will illuminate the opera's themes through the prism of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with particular focus on Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 13 (Climate Action).

Sing for Hope is The Wallis' 2022/2023 Season Company-in-Residence, and Yunus and Zamora are Artists-in-Residence. Sing for Hope is a leading "arts peace corps" that creates initiatives – including the Sing for Hope Pianos in parks and public spaces from Beverly Hills to the Bronx to Beirut – that promote the mission of art for all.

Monica Yunus says, "We are thrilled to bring this magical work to life at The Wallis this season! As a cornerstone production of our Wallis Artist Residency this season, *The Last Sorcerer* hits our sweet spot: timelessly beautiful music with a powerful message of equity that resonates for today." Adds Camille Zamora, "There could be no better way to celebrate Women's History Month and our Artist Residency at The Wallis than with this rediscovered operatic treasure by one of the great unsung (s)heroes of the nineteenth century. We sense Pauline García Viardot smiling down on our rehearsal process!"

Tickets for this performance (\$39-\$125) are on sale now, as are single tickets and subscriptions to all performances in The Wallis' 2022/2023 Season. TheWallis.org/sorcerer

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills. To purchase single tickets, subscriptions and for more information, please call 310-746-4000 (Monday – Friday, 10 am to 6 pm) or visit TheWallis.org.

The Wallis is closely monitoring the ever-changing local health and safety environment carefully and addressing known health factors at the moment. Should plans change and any performance be required to be postponed or cancelled or if venue capacity limitations are instituted, ticket holders will be notified immediately with options for their purchased tickets per The Wallis' ticketing policies.

The health and safety of patrons, staff, and artists inside and outside the venue are a top priority for The Wallis. Facial masks are no longer required but are strongly encouraged and recommended. The Wallis' health and safety protocols are also subject to change at the venue's sole discretion or in accordance with LA County and City of Beverly Hills regulations. Current Health & Safety Protocols and updates may also be accessed at [TheWallis.org/Safety](https://www.thewallis.org/Safety). Policies are subject to change.

Soprano, Sing for Hope Co-Founder, and 2022/2023 Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Artist-in-Residence **MONICA YUNUS** (Stella) has been called "especially winning" by *The New York Times*, with a "voice that sparkles like the best of diamonds" (*Omaha World Herald*). A principal artist at The Metropolitan Opera for over a decade, Yunus has been featured in multiple Metropolitan Opera HD broadcasts, including *The Magic Flute*, *Le Comte Ory*, and *La Rondine*. Favorite roles include Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Countess and Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, and Adina in *L'Elisir D'Amore*. The 2022-2023 season finds Yunus as Artist-in-Residence alongside her organization, Sing for Hope, as the Company-in-Residence at The Wallis Center for Performing Arts. Yunus' concert and recital performances have taken her all over the world, from her native Bangladesh to Spain, Guatemala, and Lebanon - and have featured her alongside legendary singers such as Plácido Domingo, and José Carreras. A multi-year ambassador for *The Zouk Mikael International Festival* in Lebanon, she thrilled audiences in varied concerts over the years. Highlights include collaborations with bass-baritone Bryn Terfel and tenor Joseph Calleja as well as Jon Batiste, former bandleader of *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert. Yunus' discography includes *The Tender Land Suite* on KOCH International Classics, and *An Aids Quilt Songbook: Sing for Hope*, a star-studded collaboration with cellist Yo-Yo Ma, mezzo sopranos Joyce DiDonato and Isabel Leonard, and actor-narrator Sharon Stone. Yunus is credited as a producer on the album *Legion of Peace: Songs Inspired by Peace Laureates*. A graduate of The Juilliard School, Yunus is the Co-Founder of *Sing for Hope*, a leading "arts peace corps" that creates programs such as the Sing for Hope Pianos in public spaces from the Bronx to Beirut that promote the mission of art for all. She has presented and performed at The United Nations, the US Capitol, Aspen Ideas Festival, Oxford University, and the Skoll World Forum for Social Entrepreneurship. She has been honored as a Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Award and a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum. An Artist Lecturer at Carnegie Mellon University, Yunus is a frequent speaker on arts advocacy and the burgeoning field of arts in health and is a founding member of the National Organization for Arts in Health. She has been the Housewright Eminent Artist-Scholar-in-Residence at Florida State University and the inaugural Reflexions Artist-in-Residence at University of Arkansas and serves on the faculty of Mostly Modern Festival. Born in Chittagong, Bangladesh and raised in New Jersey, Yunus is the daughter of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus.

Soprano, Sing for Hope Co-Founder, and 2022/2023 Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Artist-in-Residence **CAMILLE ZAMORA** (La Reine) is known for her "dignity and glowing sound" (*The New York Times*) in "luminous, transcendently lyrical" performances (*Opera News*) that "combine gentility and emotional fire" (*The Houston Chronicle*). In collaboration with artists ranging from Yo-Yo Ma to Sting to The Mambo Kings, Zamora's performances have been heard on five continents in venues from Carnegie Hall to Zimbabwe's Harare International Festival, and in live broadcasts on NPR, BBC, Deutsche Radio, and Sirius XM. Zamora has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras, including Orchestra of St. Luke's, London Symphony Orchestra, Guadalajara Symphony, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and American Symphony Orchestra. Hailed by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and NBC Latino as a leading interpreter of classical Spanish song, she has performed her signature concert of zarzuela arias, boleros, and tangos (arranged for her by Grammy® Award winner Jeff Tyzik) with orchestras including Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, Florida Orchestra, Virginia Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, and more. Camille's recent seasons have featured performances with Yo-Yo Ma at the US Capitol, her Kennedy Center debut, and signature operatic roles including her tour de force double-bill of *La voix humaine* and *I Pagliacci*, awarded "Favorite Performance of the Year" by *The Columbus*

Dispatch. Other highlights include music of Enrique Granados with Yo-Yo Ma and Cristina Pato in the award-winning documentary film *The Music of Strangers*, and *Twin Spirits: Robert and Clara Schumann* at Lincoln Center and LA's Music Center with Joshua Bell, Natasha Paremski, Sting, and Trudie Styler. A champion of contemporary music, Zamora made her Lincoln Center Festival debut in Bright Sheng's *Poems from the Sung Dynasty*, and performed Aaron Jay Kernis' *Simple Songs for Soprano and Orchestra* under the baton of the composer, and songs of Ricky Ian Gordon with the composer at the piano at Lincoln Center. Her two recent albums – *If the night grows dark / Si la noche se hace oscura: Four Centuries of Spanish Song* and Viardot's *Le dernier sorcier* – debuted on *Billboard's* Top Ten Classical Chart, and her recording of Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* with American Symphony Orchestra was a *New York Times* Classical Playlist Choice and *Opera News* Recording of the Year. Zamora is the Co-Founder of the non-profit Sing for Hope, and has presented performances and keynotes at The United Nations, the US Capitol, Aspen Institute, Harvard University, Oxford University, and the Skoll World Forum for Social Entrepreneurship. A frequent speaker in the fields of creative placemaking and arts in public health, she is a founding member of the National Organization for Arts in Health. She has been honored with a Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Award, a World Harmony Torch-Bearer Award, a 100 Hispanic Women Community Pride Award, and named one of *Town & Country's* Top 50 Americans in Philanthropy, *NY1's* New Yorker of the Week, and one of *CNN's* Most Intriguing People. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School, and serves on the Board of Directors of The Juilliard School, Eaglebrook, and Grameen Creative Lab.

Emmy-nominated Actress and Activist **MONIQUE COLEMAN (Narrator)** started her acting career in theater and television at a very young age in Columbia, South Carolina. Her training began at the Workshop Theater School of Dramatic Arts, and she graduated from DePaul University in Chicago, earning her BFA in Acting in 2002. Coleman performed her first lead in the independent feature entitled *Mother of the River*, which was shot in the historic Charleston, South Carolina. The film won numerous awards at film festivals in Chicago. Two years later, Coleman appeared as Young Donna in The Family Channel Movie *The Ditch Digger's Daughters* for which she was nominated for a Young Artists Award of Hollywood. During her sophomore year of high school, Coleman wrote, directed, produced, and starred in her own one-person play entitled "Voices from Within" for standing room only-audiences. On stage in Chicago, Coleman starred in productions of *Noises Off*, *Polaroid Stories*, *The Real Thing*, and *The Colored Museum*. In 2005, Coleman got the chance to work opposite one of her heroes, the legendary James Earl Jones, when she played Leesha in the 2005 Hallmark TV Movie *The Reading Room*. She received a 2006 Camie Award for the role and represented the film at the NAACP Image Awards. In 2006, Coleman rose to prominence in *High School Musical*, where she portrayed Taylor McKessie, the best friend of Gabriella Montez (Vanessa Hudgens). Before that, she was a recurring guest star in *The Suite Life of Zack & Cody* episodes, "Forever Plaid", "Not So Suite 16", "Neither a Borrower Nor a Speller Bee" and "A Prom Story." Coleman has had seven other guest appearances on television, including *Boston Public*, *Gilmore Girls*, *Malcolm in the Middle*, *Strong Medicine*, *10-8: Officers on Duty*, *Married to the Kellys*, and *Veronica Mars*. Coleman was also in the first ever *Disney Channel Games* in 2006, She showcased her ballroom skills in "Dance With Me" while she partnered with National Youth Latin Champion Jared Murillo. She is the host of *3 Minute Game Show: High School Musical Edition* on Disney Channel. She recorded a song called "Christmas Vacation" for the holiday album entitled *A Disney Channel Holiday*, and appeared in *High School Musical 2* and *High School Musical 3*. Coleman competed in ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* reality dance competition, paired with professional partner Louis van Amstel. The pair appeared on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. She was the last female in the contest that year, and was very gracious in defeat, appearing on the *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* show on the same night as the Results Show to thank her fans for their votes and support. Coleman continues to delight fans worldwide in film and television hits including her recent hit Lifetime movie *A Christmas Dance Reunion*. A renowned activist, she is a Youth Champion of The United Nations and a member of the Board of Directors of Sing for Hope.

A singer of diverse talents, Nigerian American baritone **BABATUNDE AKINBOBOYE** (Kakamiche, A.K.A. The Sorcerer) is known for his enthralling stage presence. He has performed with the Los Angeles Opera, Opera San Jose, Opera Santa Barbara, Long Beach Opera, and Utah Opera. Babatunde has also debuted the roles of Drew in the Opera Works' Arts for Social Awareness Project's world premiere production of *The Discord Opera*, and Zanni in the world premiere of Gloria Coates' *Stolen Identity*. His most recent performances

include Daggoo in LA Opera's *Moby Dick*, Escamillo in Pacific Opera Project's production of *Carmen*, Lucha's Father in The Industry's production of *Hopscotch*, and Valentin in Detroit Opera's production of *Faust*. As an advocate for the performance of art song and operatic works written by African, and African American composers, Akinboboye has headlined the Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry awards in Lagos, Nigeria performing a fusion of opera and traditional African music. He has been a featured performer at both the National Association of Negro Musicians Annual Conference as well as the African American Art Song Alliance Conference. His honors include Regional Finalist of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Audition and finalist in the International Eisteddfod Vocal Solo Competition in Llangollen, Wales. In December of 2018, Akinboboye combined his love of classical opera and hip hop and created the new genre Hip Hopera in a viral video that gained over 10 million views and was featured on Time.com, Classic FM, MSN.com and more. His debut EP *Della Citta* is now available.

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About Sing for Hope

Sing for Hope harnesses the power of the arts to create a better world. Its creative programs bring hope, healing, and connection to millions of people in hospitals, care facilities, schools, refugee camps, transit hubs, and community spaces worldwide. Sing for Hope partners with hundreds of community-based organizations, mobilizes thousands of artists in creative service, and produces artist-created Sing for Hope Pianos across the US and around the world. Sing for Hope traces its roots to 9/11, when Juilliard sopranos Camille Zamora and Monica Yunus organized fellow musicians to perform for the firehouse at Lincoln Center, which had lost twelve of firefighters that day. In the months that followed, realizing the power of the arts in times of crisis, they continued to reach out across the city to share soothing music and art with communities in need, growing their ranks from dozens of artists to thousands. In 2010, as a symbol and celebration of art for all, they launched New York City's Sing for Hope Pianos, now one of the country's largest public arts projects. Sing for Hope's programs include

- SING FOR HOPE PIANOS — From the Bronx to Beirut, The Sing for Hope Pianos is a global arts initiative that produces artist-designed pianos; places them in public spaces for anyone and everyone to enjoy; then transports and activates them year-round in permanent homes in schools, hospitals, transit hubs, refugee camps, and community-based organizations. With more media impressions than any other public art project in the past decade, and over 575 individual piano artworks created to date, Sing for Hope has provided more pianos for under-resourced public schools than any other organization in the world.
- SING FOR HOPE HEALING ARTS — Research-based creative performances, workshops, and curated cultural experiences that promote wellness, connection, and respite in hospitals, vaccination centers, long-term care facilities, hospices, and treatment centers. Programs encompass both in-person arts experiences as well as daily live virtual performances, classes, and workshops via our Open Arts platform.
- SING FOR HOPE EDUCATION — Dynamic arts workshops and standards-based curricula that inspire civic action and uplift youth, educators, and local communities. Programs, which include the Sing for Hope Young at Arts Lab and HandaHarmony, serve youth in grades K-12 in partnership with agencies including NYC Department of Education, Los Angeles Unified School District, and The United Nations.
- SING FOR HOPE GLOBAL — Creative advocacy, leadership, and program design that drive the integration of the arts in policy and at global convenings on social change. Sing for Hope is the official Cultural Partner of the World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates.

Sing for Hope champions art for all because we believe the arts have an unmatched capacity to uplift, unite, and heal.

About Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national, and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming

that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 350 theater, dance, music, film, cabaret, conversation, and family entertainment programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as “au courant” (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, “If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis.” Its programming has been nominated for 79 Ovation Awards and nine L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. Michael Nemeroff is Chairman of The Wallis' Board of Directors.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: TheWallis.org.

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EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

WHAT:

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Monique Coleman Narrator

WHEN:

Friday, March 3, 2023, 7:30 pm

RUNNING TIME:

Approximately 75 minutes with no intermission.

TICKET PRICES AND INFORMATION:

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