

Lincoln Center's

January 24–March 27, 2018

American Songbook

Lead Support provided by PGIM, the global investment management business of Prudential Financial, Inc.

The Program

Thursday, February 15, 2018, at 8:30 pm

Justin Vivian Bond Sings The Carpenters

Matt Ray, *Music Director and Piano*

Claudia Chopek, *Violin*

Nath Ann Carrera, *Guitar*

Danton Boller, *Bass*

David Berger, *Drums*

This evening's program is approximately 75 minutes long and will be performed without intermission.

Please make certain all your electronic devices are switched off.

Endowment support provided by Bank of America

This performance is made possible in part by the Josie Robertson Fund for Lincoln Center.

Steinway Piano

The Appel Room

Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall

Additional support for Lincoln Center's American Songbook is provided by Rita J. and Stanley H. Kaplan Family Foundation, The DuBose and Dorothy Heyward Memorial Fund, The Shubert Foundation, Great Performers Circle, Chairman's Council, and Friends of Lincoln Center.

Public support is provided by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

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Artist catering provided by Zabar's and Zabars.com

UPCOMING AMERICAN SONGBOOK EVENTS IN THE APPEL ROOM:

Friday, February 16, at 8:30 pm

The Blind Boys of Alabama

Saturday, February 17, at 8:30 pm

The Songs of Scott Frankel & Michael Korie

IN THE ROSE THEATER:

Tuesday, March 27, at 8:00 pm

Rosanne Cash

Randy Newman's performance, scheduled for March 26 in the Rose Theater, has been cancelled.

The Appel Room and Rose Theater are located in Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall.

For tickets, call (212) 721-6500 or visit AmericanSongbook.org. Call the Lincoln Center Info Request Line at (212) 875-5766 or visit AmericanSongbook.org for complete program information.

Join the conversation: @LincolnCenter

We would like to remind you that the sound of coughing and rustling paper might distract the performers and your fellow audience members.

In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, those who must leave before the end of the performance are asked to do so between pieces. Flash photography and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in the building.

An Enduring Legacy of Hits That Put the “Soft” in Rock

By Karen Tongson

The Carpenters, a brother-sister duo known for cheery pop tunes and for love songs overflowing with sweet sentiments, came to prominence during one of the most tumultuous eras in the U.S. both musically and politically. In the wake of the Summer of Love, Woodstock, and the escalation of the war in Vietnam, Karen Carpenter’s voice and Richard Carpenter’s lush musical arrangements—described by detractors as “saccharine” and championed by others as distinctly smooth and easy on the ears—began to dominate the airwaves at the start of the 1970s. Their breakthrough hit, “(They Long to Be) Close to You” (1970), was penned by Burt Bacharach and Hal David, and released nearly a decade earlier by Dionne Warwick to little fanfare. But with Richard’s lilting new piano arrangements foregrounding Karen’s inimitable alto, the song shot to the top of the charts.

The Carpenters’ follow-up single, “We’ve Only Just Begun,” doubled down on the duo’s melodic balladry with overdubbed harmonies, thus heralding a new age of innocence, or at least a softness in popular music that would vie with “the hard” (in the form of Janis Joplin, Led Zeppelin, and the Rolling Stones, among many others) for America’s ears—and wallets. With their string of hits between 1970 and 1972, like “Rainy Days and Mondays,” “Superstar,” and “Top of the World,” the Carpenters quickly developed a reputation for being squares, or as one critic put it, “goody four-shoes.”

Both Richard and Karen chafed at what the infamous rock critic Lester Bangs called their “creepy” wholesomeness. The two complained about how A&M records marketed the siblings in soft-focus, vaguely romantic poses amongst jutting rocks on picturesque seashores. Meanwhile, John Bettis, Richard’s lyricist and songwriting partner, unabashedly declared that in 1970, the year the Carpenters first topped the charts: “Everybody was dying to be something they weren’t...Everybody was dying to *not* be from the suburbs. The fact of the matter was that we were who we were, and we were white, middle-class American kids. And we wrote like that, sang like that; we dressed like that; we lived like that.”

By 1972, however, the Carpenters would come to defy expectations and innovate the easy listening format with something no one had ever heard before: a distorted rock guitar solo smack in the middle of a love ballad. “Goodbye to Love,” one of the first bona fide hits composed by Richard Carpenter and John Bettis, introduced the world to that greatest of musical oxymorons: soft rock. It was Richard who requested the

“fuzz guitar,” the fly in the ointment of their otherwise familiar, tender approach to pop laced with oboes. Karen was the one who made the phone call to guitarist Tony Peluso, asking him to play for the track. As he recalls, “Richard wanted an aggressive, sawtooth guitar solo in the middle of this Doris Day easy-listening-style record.” “Goodbye to Love” elicited a double take, upending expectations of the Carpenters and their music and disturbing some of their older fans who were concerned they’d gone over to the dark side.

By the middle of the decade, the Carpenters were on the waning end of what Neil Tennant of the Pet Shop Boys cannily described as an act’s “imperial phase,” or a performer’s commercial and cultural peak. From 1970 to 1975, the Carpenters logged 12 Top 10 hits, including three No. 1 and five No. 2 singles, in addition to 14 gold records. After 1975, only one of their songs would ever reach the Billboard Top 20, let alone approach the Top 10. Karen and Richard both felt that their straight-laced image prevented the rock cognoscenti from taking them seriously as musicians. Far from being straight-laced in their personal lives, however, each of the Carpenter siblings was struggling with severe health issues by decade’s end. Richard went to rehab for a Quaalude addiction, and Karen sought counseling for her struggle with anorexia as the 1970s drew to a close.

On February 4, 1983, Karen Carpenter died at the age of 32 in the same bedroom she grew up in, in her parents’ suburban home nestled in Downey, California. Unlike many other young icons of rock and pop lost to overdoses under dramatic circumstances—from Janis Joplin to Jimi Hendrix—Karen died from complications as a result of her anorexia. She in essence faded out slowly, just like the music she and her brother Richard were known for making together.

Nevertheless, the Carpenters’ musical legacy, largely owed to the singularity of Karen’s voice, has attained a robust afterlife in decades since, through cover albums, reissues, and through tribute performances like Justin Vivian Bond’s. Resonating in other voices, Karen’s own haunts us with the enduring hope and yearning that suffuses so many of the Carpenters’ songs, allowing both the squares and misfits who have grown to love them to hold onto the notion that “every sha la la la, every whoah-whoah-oh still shines.”

Karen Tongson is Associate Professor of English, Gender Studies, and American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. She is the author of Relocations: Queer Suburban Imaginaries (NYU Press), and the forthcoming Why Karen Carpenter Matters (ForeEdge Press). You can also hear Karen talk about pop culture, the arts, and entertainment on the weekly Pop Rocket Podcast, hosted by comedian Guy Branum.

Justin Vivian Bond



DAVID KINELMAN

Justin Vivian Bond is a trans-gender artist living in New York City. As a performer both on and Off-Broadway, Mx Bond has received numerous accolades that include an Obie Award (2001), Bessie Award (2004), Tony nomination (2007), Ethyl Eichelberger Award (2007), as well as Peter S. Reed Foundation and New York Foundation for the Arts grants. Mx Bond authored the Lambda Literary Award-winning memoir *TANGO: My Childhood, Back-*

wards and in High Heels (The Feminist Press, 2011).

Films include John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus* (2006), in addition to *Sunset Stories* (2012), *Imaginary Heroes* (2004), *Fanci's Persuasion* (1995), and *After Louie* (2017). Television credits include *Difficult People* (2017), *High Maintenance* (2016), and *The Get Down* (2017). Solo exhibitions of Mx Bond's watercolors, sculptural installations, and live art have been presented by the New Museum (New York, 2017), Participant, Inc. (New York, 2011, 2016), Art Market Provincetown (2014), and Vitrine (London, 2015). Albums include *Kiki and Herb: Do You Hear What We Hear?*, *Kiki and Herb Will Die for You: Live at Carnegie Hall*, *Dendrophile*, and *Silver Wells*.

Matt Ray

Matt Ray (music director, piano) is a New York-based pianist, singer, songwriter, arranger, and music director whose arrangements and piano playing have been critically praised. Notable live performances include Carnegie Hall with Kat Edmonson; the Hollywood Bowl with reggae legend Burning Spear; headlining his own shows at Joe's Pub; performing at Lincoln Center's American Songbook in his own show this year, and in 2015 with Joey Arias; as well as shows in Paris and the U.K. with Justin Vivian Bond. Mr. Ray co-wrote songs for and performed in Bridget Everett's one-hour Comedy Central special *Gynecological Wonder* as well as Everett's hit show *Rock Bottom*. Other work includes music directing *The Billie Holiday Project* at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, penning a string and piano arrangement for the fifth season finale of Showtime's *Nurse Jackie*, and music directing Taylor Mac's *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*, for which he won the 2017 Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama Inspired by American History. Mr. Ray has released two jazz albums as a leader: *We Got It!* (2001) and *Lost In New York* (2006); one album of original pop/folk material called *Songs for the Anonymous* (2013); and has appeared on numerous albums

as a sideman, including Kat Edmonson's *Way Down Low* (2012) and her upcoming album to be released in 2018.

Claudia Chopek

Violinist, violist, and arranger Claudia Chopek (violin) has shared stages with Bruce Springsteen, Moby, Peter Morén (of Peter Bjorn and John), Cassandra Wilson, Donna Summer, Dave Stewart, Jesse Malin, Joe McGinty's Loser's Lounge, and Josh Groban; appeared on recordings by The Last Shadow Puppets, Hurray for the Riff Raff, TV on the Radio, Norah Jones, Nancy Sinatra, Ryan Adams, and The Ladybug Transistor; and was a guest performer with comedian Sarah Silverman at the New York Comedy Festival at Carnegie Hall. Having recently toured internationally with The Last Shadow Puppets, she now performs on viola in the Broadway musical *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*. On television, she can be heard in *Bored to Death* (HBO), *Sesame Street* (PBS), and in performances with Sia (*Saturday Night Live*), Father John Misty (*Late Night with David Letterman*), Ryan Bingham (*Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*), and episodes of *Smash* and *Gossip Girl*. Film credits include the 2010 Academy Award-winning short film *The New Tenants* as violinist and arranger. Ms. Chopek is also founding member of New Retro Strings and one of the founding members of Echo of The Ghost.

Nath Ann Carrera

Acclaimed guitarist and singer Nath Ann Carrera (guitar) has performed solo shows at La MaMa (*Death to the Patriarchal Rape Heads*), Joe's Pub at the Public Theater, Wild Project, and at the Afterglow Festival (*I Don't Want to Throw Rice, I Want to Throw Rocks: The Early Southern Gothicism of Dolly Parton*); sings as WITCH CAMP with Amber Martin; performs with Justin Vivian Bond; opened for Martha Wainwright at City Winery; and has also sung at such venues as Performance Space 122, The Kitchen, Abrons Arts Center, (Le) Poisson Rouge, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and at MoMA PS1.

Danton Boller

Danton Boller (bass) brings musical depth with historical reference and a modern sensibility to every performance. Mentored by famed Dave Brubeck Quartet bassist Eugene Wright, he was a member of the Roy Hargrove Quintet, with whom he recorded two highly lauded records—one of which received a Grammy nomination—and is also featured on its DVD release *Live at the New Morning*. Mr. Boller's versatility has led him to the stage with inimitable artists such as Justin Vivian Bond, Taylor Mac, Alexi Murdoch, Elysian Fields, Joey Arias, Bridget Everett, Matt Ray, Q-Tip, Keller Williams, Robert Glasper, Jon Fishman, Seun Kuti, Rickie Lee Jones, Kat Edmonson, and Patti LaBelle, among others, and in *Fela!* on Broadway. He leads The Sides—an

instrumental cinematic soundscape project that illuminates electro, avant-jazz, dub, afrobeat, and rock—and actively records and produces in his New York studio. He co-produced Edmonson’s critically acclaimed *Way Down Low* (Sony Records) and recently produced the 2017 EP *FELA aKUsTic* (Okaymusic label) featuring Sahr Ngaujah, the lead of Broadway’s *Fela!*

David Berger

David Berger (drums) is a New York–based drummer, writer, arranger, music director, teacher, and bandleader. Recent work includes touring and/or recording with The Hot Sardines, Amy Helm, Ana Gasteyer, Justin Vivian Bond, Julian Fleisher, Molly Pope, and Andy Rosen (a.k.a. Goat). Past work includes performances with Meow Meow, Joey Arias, Taylor Mac, Deva Mahal, and Bridget Everett. Mr. Berger has appeared on over 30 commercial recordings, including the yet-to-be released solo project by Byron Isaacs of The Lumineers.

American Songbook

In 1998, Lincoln Center launched American Songbook, dedicated to the celebration of popular American song. Designed to highlight and affirm the creative mastery of America’s songwriters from their emergence at the turn of the 19th century up through the present, American Songbook spans all styles and genres, from the form’s early roots in Tin Pan Alley and Broadway to the eclecticism of today’s singer-songwriters. American Songbook also showcases the outstanding interpreters of popular song, including established and emerging concert, cabaret, theater, and songwriter performers.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (LCPA) serves three primary roles: presenter of artistic programming, national leader in arts and education and community relations, and manager of the Lincoln Center campus. A presenter of more than 3,000 free and ticketed events, performances, tours, and educational activities annually, LCPA offers 15 programs, series, and festivals including American Songbook, Great Performers, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Midsummer Night Swing, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the White Light Festival, as well as the Emmy Award–winning *Live From Lincoln Center*, which airs nationally on PBS. As manager of the Lincoln Center campus, LCPA provides support and services for the Lincoln Center complex and the 11 resident organizations. In addition, LCPA led a \$1.2 billion campus renovation, completed in October 2012.

Lincoln Center Programming Department

Jane Moss, *Ehrenkranz Artistic Director*

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Nana Asase, *Assistant to the Artistic Director*

Olivia Fortunato, *Programming Assistant*

Dorian Mueller, *House Program Coordinator*

For American Songbook

Matt Berman, *Lighting Design*

Scott Stauffer, *Sound Design*

Janet Rucker, *Company Manager*

Matt Berman

Matt Berman is the resident lighting designer for Lincoln Center's American Songbook. He recently designed the lighting for Kristin Chenoweth's *My Love Letter to Broadway* at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, and for "Meow Meow's Pandemonium" with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at Royal Festival Hall. Mr. Berman continues his design work for Chenoweth, Liza Minnelli, Alan Cumming, Meow Meow, Brian Stokes Mitchell, and Elaine Paige on the road. Through his work with ASCAP and several U.S.-based charities, he has designed for a starry roster that includes Bernadette Peters, Barbra Streisand, Reba McEntire, Melissa Errico, Deborah Voigt, Michael Urie, Stevie Wonder, India.Arie, Garth Brooks, Billy Joel, and Sting. His international touring schedule has allowed him to design for iconic venues such as Royal Albert Hall, Paris Opera, Royal Theatre Carré in Amsterdam, the Sporting Club in Monte Carlo, the Acropolis, the famed amphitheater in Taormina, Sicily, as well as Luna Park in Buenos Aires, and the Sydney Opera House. Closer to home, he has done work for the Hollywood Bowl, Alice Tully Hall, and Carnegie Hall. Other Broadway credits include the Tony Award-winning *Liza's at the Palace*, *Bea Arthur on Broadway* at the Booth Theatre, Nancy LaMott's *Just in Time for Christmas*, and *Kathy Griffin Wants a Tony* at the Belasco Theater.

Scott Stauffer

Scott Stauffer has been the sound designer for Lincoln Center's American Songbook since 1999. His Broadway design credits include *A Free Man of Color*, *The Rivals*, *Contact* (also in London and Tokyo), *Marie Christine*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Jekyll & Hyde*. Off-Broadway Mr. Stauffer has worked on *Mother Freaking Hood*, *Subverted*, *Promises*, *Hereafter*, *A Minister's Wife*, *Bernarda Alba*, *Third*, *Belle Epoque*, *Big Bill*, *Elegies*, *Hello Again*, *The Spitfire Grill*, *Pageant*, and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. His regional credits include productions at the Manhattan School of Music, Capitol Repertory Theatre, University of Michigan, Hanger Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and Alley Theatre. His concert credits include many Lincoln Center galas, as well as the Actors Fund concerts of *Frank Loesser*, *Broadway 101*, *Hair*, and *On the Twentieth Century*. At Carnegie Hall he has worked with Chita Rivera and Brian Stokes Mitchell. As a sound engineer, Mr. Stauffer has worked on *The Lion King*, *Juan Darién*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, *Carousel*, *Once on This Island*, and the original *Little Shop of Horrors*.