



Soprano Karen Slack and Pianist Michelle Cann Release Groundbreaking New Album, *Beyond the Years*

Featuring 19 Unpublished Songs by Composer Florence Price, Including 16 World Premiere Recordings, Championed by ONEcomposer

Pre-Release Single, “Desire,” Out July 12!

Out July 26, 2024 on Azica Records
Press-Only EPK (PW - Price):
<http://bit.ly/BeyondtheYears>
Physical Copies Available Upon Request

“not only one of the nation's most celebrated sopranos, but a leading voice in changing-making spaces in classical music” – *Trilloquy*

www.sopranokarenslack.com | www.michellecann.com | www.ONEcomposer.org

New York, NY (June 6, 2024) – On Friday, July 26, 2024, soprano **Karen Slack** – known for performances that “ripped the audience’s hearts out” (*Opera News*) – and pianist **Michelle Cann** – “one of the most visible components of the music of Florence Price” (*Chicago Tribune*) – unveil ***Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price*** on **Azica Records**. Produced by Azica’s **Alan Bise** and **ONEcomposer**, an organization that celebrates musicians whose legacies have been historically excluded, this highly anticipated album features 19 unpublished songs by Price, including 16 world premiere recordings. *Beyond the Years* is an opportunity to connect historically excluded musical legacies with present-day artistic excellence, motivated by the woman who first inspired this initiative: **Florence Beatrice Price**. A pre-release single, the song “**Desire**,” will be available on all streaming platforms **July 12**.

ONEcomposer states, “The opportunity to hear Price’s songs performed by industry leaders positions her where she belongs– alongside the great art song composers. Karen Slack is one of the most gifted communicators in her industry, and her versatility in presenting recitals, chamber music, and opera is exceptional. Michelle Cann has been championing the works of Florence Price for many years. This album is advocacy. It is an invitation to performers, educators, musicologists, and anyone with curiosity to continue the work of fully realizing Price’s legacy.”

Known for performances that “ripped the audience’s hearts out” (*Opera News*), **Karen Slack** is a devoted champion of the music of Black composers, past and present. Of her first commercial recording, she says “I know that I am the artist for this time to bring these pieces to life, and I couldn’t think of a better partner than the dynamic pianist Michelle Cann to breathe life into this work. The album title *Beyond The Years* was chosen because while all of these pieces were written before I was born, they feel fresh and sound as if they were written yesterday!”

Speaking on the opportunity to work on her first solo recording, Slack states, “When ONEcomposer approached me with the opportunity to collaborate on a solo recording, I was elated. Each of these songs is incredibly beautiful, and it saddened me to learn that many of these amazing works hadn’t seen the light of day in over 70 years, if ever! Thinking about Ms. Price’s incredible story and knowing that, although much has changed institutionally, many things remain the same, it reminded me of times I’ve been in spaces where I certainly belonged but felt unseen and unwelcome. I know that I am the artist for this time to bring these pieces to life, and I couldn’t think of a better partner than the dynamic pianist Michelle Cann to breathe life into this work.”

Recognized as a leading interpreter of the piano music of Florence Price, **Michelle Cann** performed the New York City premiere of Price’s Piano Concerto in One Movement with The Dream Unfinished Orchestra in July 2016 and the Philadelphia premiere with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin in February 2021. Her recording of the concerto with the New York Youth Symphony won a GRAMMY® Award in 2023 for Best Orchestral Performance. Her acclaimed debut solo album *Revival*, featuring music by Price and Margaret Bonds, was released in May 2023 on the Curtis Studio label. She has also recorded two Price piano quintets with the Catalyst Quartet.

With an ever-increasing awareness of the excellence that defined her career, Florence Price is finally receiving the recognition that she deserves. Price won the Wanamaker Prize in 1932, and she was the first Black woman to have a symphony premiered by a major American orchestra. *Beyond the Years* hones in on Florence Price as the composer of songs. Amongst Price’s treasures in the archives at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, is her well worn copy of *Vaccari: Practical Method of Italian Singing*, a symbol of her fastidious commitment to writing idiomatically for the voice.

Whether it was her love of text setting or her belief that her songs could be more easily shared than her larger scale works, Price worked tirelessly advocating for this repertoire. She regularly corresponded with great singers of her generation including Carol Brice, Camilla Williams, Inez Matthews, and Marian Anderson, frequently sending songs for their consideration and use. As performed by Karen Slack and Michelle Cann, these songs are receiving new life.

Beyond The Years Track List

1. Florence Price – *Desire* [1:45]
2. Florence Price – *Bright be the Place* [2:20]
3. Florence Price – *Ships that Pass in the Night* [3:58]
4. Florence Price – *Pittance* [2:58]
5. Florence Price – *The Sum* [2:54]
6. Florence Price – *Who Grope with Love for Hands* [2:35]
7. Florence Price – *There be None* [2:32]
8. Florence Price – *Sacrament* [2:03]
9. Florence Price – *What do I Care for Morning* [2:16]
10. Florence Price – *The Dawn’s Awake* [2:12]
11. Florence Price – *Beyond the Years* [3:57]
12. Florence Price – *Youth* [0:57]
13. Florence Price – *Winter Idyl* [3:15]
14. Florence Price – *Little Things* [2:41]
15. Florence Price – *Your Leafy Voice* [2:45]
16. Florence Price – *Spring* [2:03]
17. Florence Price – *I Remember* [2:03]
18. Florence Price – *Interim* [3:11]
19. Florence Price – *Song is So Old* [2:00]

Total Time: 53:31

Karen Slack, soprano
Michelle Cann, piano

Producer and Recording Engineer: Alan Bise
Executive Producer: ONEcomposer

Co-Producer: Tamara Acosta
Co-Producer: Dr. Stephen Spinelli
Cover Photo: Kia Caldwell Photography
Liner notes: Dr. Stephen Spinelli and Tamara Acosta
Design by: Gillian Riesen, Emitha LLC
Piano Technician: Dennis Chupp

Recorded at Sauder Concert Hall, Goshen College, September 8-10, 2023
Azica Records ACD-71370

About Karen Slack

Known for performances that “ripped the audience’s hearts out” (*Opera News*), **Karen Slack** is “not only one of the nation’s most celebrated sopranos, but a leading voice in changing-making spaces in classical music” (*Trilloquy*). A recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, Slack has been named Lyric Unlimited Artist-in-Residence at Lyric Opera of Chicago for the 2024-2025 season as well as Artist-in-Residence at top entrepreneurial institution, Babson College.

Slack soon embarks on a nationwide world premiere tour of Slack’s *African Queens*, an evening-length vocal recital of new art songs commissioned from acclaimed composers Jasmine Barnes, Damien Geter, Jessie Montgomery, Shawn Okpebholo, Dave Ragland, Carlos Simon, and Joel Thompson. She premieres the program at the Ravinia Festival, followed by performances at co-commissioners Aspen Music Festival, Tanglewood Music Festival, 92NY, Washington Performing Arts, Denver Friends of Chamber Music, and Newport Classical Festival. In May 2024, Slack made her New York Philharmonic debut.

She has performed on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, Scottish Opera, San Francisco Opera, Dallas Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and many others. She has appeared with the Melbourne and Sydney symphonies, the Bergen Philharmonic, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, made her Carnegie Hall debut with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and performed as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra in the world premiere of Hannibal Lokumbe’s *Healing Tones* led by Yannick Nézet-Séguin. A native Philadelphian, Slack is a graduate of the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music and the San Francisco Opera’s Merola Opera Program. For more information, please visit www.sopranokarenslack.com

About Michelle Cann

Lauded as “exquisite” by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and “a pianist of sterling artistry” by *Gramophone*, **Michelle Cann** has become one of the most sought-after pianists of her generation. She made her debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2021 and has recently performed concertos with The Cleveland Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Orquestra Sinfônica Municipal de São Paulo, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Baltimore, and Cincinnati. Cann was the recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, the highest honor bestowed by the Sphinx Organization. She also received the Cleveland Institute of Music’s 2022 Alumni Achievement Award and the 2022 Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award.

A celebrated chamber musician, Cann has collaborated with leading artists including the Catalyst, Dover, and Juilliard string quartets, violinists Timothy and Nikki Chooi, and cellist Thomas Mesa. She has appeared as co-host and collaborative pianist with NPR’s *From The Top*, collaborating with actor/conductor Damon Gupton, violinist Leila Josefowicz, and violinist and MacArthur Fellow Vijay Gupta. Cann’s numerous media appearances include PBS *Great Performances’ Now Hear This* hosted by Scott Yoo and *Living the Classical Life* with host Zsolt Bognár.

Cann holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in piano performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied with Paul Schenly and Dr. Daniel Shapiro, and an Artist’s Diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Robert McDonald. She joined the Curtis piano faculty in 2020 as the inaugural Eleanor Sokoloff Chair in Piano Studies. She joined the piano faculty of the Manhattan School of Music in 2023. Learn more at www.michellecann.com

About ONEcomposer

Founded in 2019 and inspired by Florence B. Price, **ONEcomposer** is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that celebrates historically excluded musical legacies through research, performance, and recording.

ONEcomposer regularly collaborates with major forces in the music industry to present top-tier performances of lesser-known works within their historical context. In 2021, ONEcomposer partnered with the Philadelphia Orchestra to present the modern-day premiere of Florence Price's original orchestration of her Piano Concerto in One Movement with Michelle Cann as soloist. Additional collaborations include performances of Price's string quartets with members of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, a restoration of the two-piano version of Price's Piano Concerto in One Movement presented at the Eastman School of Music, and a partnership with the Curtis Institute of Music to bring together Michelle Cann and Karen Slack for the first time. Beyond the Years, ONEcomposer's inaugural commercial recording, represents the organization's commitment to connecting historically excluded musical legacies with the best of modern day artistry. ONEcomposer is equally committed to making its scholarship accessible to the broader public, and the editions of scores created for this recording will be made available in the Fall of 2024. For more information on ONEcomposer, visit: www.ONEcomposer.org.



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