

ESSENTIAL VOICES USA

PRESS CONTACT

Dan Dutcher Public Relations

Dan Dutcher | 917.566.8413 | dan@dandutcherpr.com



Celebrating the American Spirit CD with Essential Voices USA, Kelli O'Hara and Ron Raines and Judith Clurman, Conductor

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Celebrating the American Spirit, performed by **Essential Voices USA (EVUSA)** and conducted by **Judith Clurman** along with guest artists, Broadway stars **Kelli O'Hara** and **Ron Raines** and composer-arranger Larry Hochman, represents an American songbook for the 21st century. The centerpiece of this CD is *Sing Out, Mr. President*, a song cycle of sixteen newly commissioned compositions set to quotations by American presidents from Washington to Obama. Originally performed at the Library of Congress and broadcast on National Public Radio, the cycle showcases the American composers **Samuel Adler, Milton Babbitt, Robert Beaser, Jason Robert Brown, Thomas Cabaniss, Jake Heggie, Larry Hochman, Michael Gilbertson, Nora Kroll-Rosenbaum, Andrew Lippa, David Ludwig, Paul Moravec, Nico Muhly, Georgia Stitt, Zachary Wadsworth, and Jesse Wiener**. The CD also includes individual new and newly arranged works by composers and writers such as Irving Berlin (*It Gets Lonely In the White House* and *God Bless America*), Leonard Bernstein (*Take Care of This House*), Sheldon Harnick (*Reason to Be Thankful*), Jennifer Higdon (*A Quiet Moment*), Larry Hochman (*Two Paraphrases on American Anthems* and *American Dream*) and Laurie Hochman (*The Pledge of Allegiance* and *American Dream*), David Ludwig (*The New Colossus*), Stephen Paulus (*Hymn for America*), Marc Shaiman (*A Seed of Grain: Theme from The American President*), and John Philip Sousa (*Stars and Stripe Forever*). Judith Clurman's abundant creativity and profound patriotism are on display throughout the CD in its model of American musical diversity, which represents a call for action and a reason for hope during a time of political crisis and conflict.

JUDITH CLURMAN says "I am thrilled to present *Celebrating the American Spirit* with these wonderful artists: Larry Hochman, soloists Kelli O'Hara and Ron Raines, my Essential Voices USA,

pianist Tedd Firth and Billy Test, and guest instrumentalists. The recording is inspired by my need to express a patriotic response to 9/11 through a complex affirmation of America's greatness. It provides me the opportunity to conduct music that I love - from Berlin to Babbit.”

ARTISTS BIOS

JUDITH CLURMAN’S ESSENTIAL VOICES USA

Judith Clurman’s Essential Voices USA (EVUSA) promotes the love of music and the art of ensemble singing. The group has a flexible roster of professional singers and auditioned volunteers who perform a wide range of musical genres and styles. High school students participate in special programs. The group’s size varies according to the musical needs of each project. EVUSA produces its own classical concerts, workshops, and recordings at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music and other well-known NYC venues and is currently in residence with The New York Pops on Carnegie Hall’s subscription series. EVUSA performed in the Leonard Bernstein Celebration at Symphony Space and participated in the Sing Out Mr. President vocal series on National Public Radio. The group has appeared in The Composer Speaks programs featuring the music of Bruce Ruben, Larry Hochman, Paul Schoenfield, Shulamit Ran, and Joshua Schmidt. EVUSA was also featured at the 2011 Rockefeller Center Tree Lighting on NBC Television. Judith conducted EVUSA student members at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. in a recording of “Peace” by Howard Shore with words by Eleanor Roosevelt. She also led them in a recording of the Marvin Hamlisch/Rupert Holmes song “The Music in My Mind” for Marvin Hamlisch’s children’s book *Marvin Makes Music*.

KELLI O’HARA

Kelli O’Hara has established herself as one of Broadway’s great leading ladies. She is currently starring in *Nice Work If You Can Get It* on Broadway opposite Matthew Broderick, receiving her fourth Tony nomination for Lead Actress in a Musical. Kelli earned her first Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations for her role in *The Light in the Piazza* in 2005. In 2006, she joined Harry Connick, Jr. on Broadway in *The Pajama Game* and received Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Award nominations. Kelli starred in *South Pacific* at Lincoln Center, garnering Tony and Drama Desk nominations. In addition to her critically acclaimed performance as Eliza Doolittle in the New York Philharmonic production of *My Fair Lady*, Kelli has performed at Carnegie Hall with The New York Pops, at the Kennedy Center and the National Symphony Orchestra, and with the Boston Pops under Keith Lockhart. She has also appear at Lincoln Center, Town Hall, Cooper Union, Joe’s Pub, Ravinia Festival, Tanglewood. She is a frequent guest artist on the PBS Memorial Day and July 4th telecast. She has performed three times at the Kennedy Center Honors in tributes for Barbara Cook, Jerry Herman and Barbra Streisand. Among her film and television credits are *Sex & the City 2*, *The Key to Reserva*, *The Dying Gaul*, NBC pilots *Blue Blood* and *All Rise*, *Alexander Hamilton* on PBS, *NUMB3RS* on CBS, *All My Children*, and the upcoming animated series *Car Talk*, as well as numerous live performances on national television shows. Kelli’s recordings include *South Pacific*, the Grammy nominated *The Light in the Piazza* and *The Pajama Game*, *The Sweet Smell of Success*, *My Life with Albertine*, *Dream True*, *Jule Styne Goes Hollywood* and her solo albums *Wonder in the World* and *Always*. Kelli resides in New York with her husband Greg and their son Owen.

RON RAINES

Born and raised in Texas, Ron Raines has had a long and illustrious international career that spans the worlds of musical theater, opera, cabaret, classical music, and television. He most recently appeared as Ben in the revival of *Follies* at the Kennedy Center, Broadway, and Los Angeles, for which he received a Tony nomination for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical. He was a three-time Emmy and Soap Opera Digest Award nominee for his role as the villain Alan Spaulding on *Guiding Light*. He has starred on Broadway in shows such as *Chicago* and *Show Boat*, and originated the role of Nick Longworth in *Teddy and Alice* (with Len Cariou). He has also had starring roles in musical and operetta, including *A Little Night Music*, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, *South Pacific*, *Annie*, *Kismet*,

Sayonara, Kiss Me Kate, The King and I, Naughty Marietta, The Merry Widow, Brigadoon, Rose Marie, Oklahoma!, Carousel, Side by Side by Sondheim, Guys and Dolls, and Man of La Mancha at the Covent Garden Festival. He has soloed with over 50 major American and international orchestras, including the Boston Pops, the Philly Pops, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Jerusalem Symphony, and the Israeli Philharmonic, and has performed at Carnegie Hall, the 92nd Street Y, Tanglewood, the London Palladium, Rainbow and Stars, and the Royal Festival Hall. He has appeared on four PBS “Great Performances” and on numerous cast albums, and has made two solo recordings. He lives in New York City with his wife and daughter.

JUDITH CLURMAN

Conductor **Judith Clurman** is renowned for her vision, artistry, and versatility. She has conducted and collaborated with world-renowned orchestras, dance companies, and music festivals, including the New York Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, the Boston Symphony, New York City Ballet, Mostly Mozart Festival, Lincoln Center’s Great Performers series, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the American Songbook Series, and the New York Pops on their Carnegie Hall subscription series. She served as Director of Choral Activities at the Juilliard School from 1989-2007, as Co-Director for Harvard University’s Leonard Bernstein: Boston to Broadway Festival, as a faculty member and vocal specialist for the National Endowment for the Arts/Columbia University Institute of Classical Music, and as a Visiting Artist/Conductor at Cambridge University, the Curtis Institute of Music, the Zimriya in Israel, and the Janacek Academy in the Czech Republic. She created and for nine years served as the music director and conductor of the Lincoln Center Tree Lighting and commissioned and premiered over fifty works by America’s most revered composers. As Associate Music Director of Sesame Street, her work with the Muppets, cast members, and guest artists earned her a 2009 Emmy nomination for Outstanding Achievement in Music Direction and Composition. Judith served as founding conductor of the New York Concert Singers and Project Youth Chorus and as music director of Prism Concerts and the 92nd Street Y’s Music of the Spirit program. Judith currently conducts Essential Voices USA, maintains an active vocal studio in New York City, and serves as chorus master for the Omaha Symphony Sacred Voices concerts and the New York Pops Carnegie Hall subscription series.

PRESS INQUIRES:

For CD s, interviews and photos contact:

DAN DUTCHER / DAN DUTCHER PUBLIC RELATIONS / 917-566- 8413 /

dan@dandutcherpr.com

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