

P E R S P E C T I V E S

Rhiannon Giddens



Renowned songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and speaker Rhiannon Giddens curates a five-concert Perspectives series throughout Carnegie Hall's 2020-2021 season. Ms. Giddens's spectacular banjo and fiddle playing, passionate vocals, and perceptive songwriting are all wedded to a boundless musical curiosity that explores untold stories and reclaims American musical traditions for our time. A recipient of the 2017 MacArthur Foundation grant for exceptional creativity, her collaborative projects with the Carolina Chocolate Drops, Our Native Daughters, and multi-instrumentalist Francesco Turrisi, as well as a string of award-winning solo albums among other projects, have made Ms. Giddens one of the most vibrant musicians of our time.

Ms. Giddens's Perspectives reveals the full range of her remarkable talents, shedding a light on the shared history of a variety of musical traditions around the world. Beginning in October, she is joined by Mr. Turrisi on piano for two back-to-back recitals on the same evening in Weill Recital Hall. The duo comes together again in January with songs from their critically praised album *there is no Other*. In March, Ms. Giddens is one of four banjo-playing African American women in the band Our Native Daughters, who kick off Carnegie Hall's citywide festival, *Voices of Hope: Artists in Times of Oppression*. In an evening titled *Songs of Our Native Daughters*, they take audiences on a musical journey from the days of slavery to the present through an exploration of love, loss, and hope in the face of cruelty and oppression. Her residency culminates in April with *Mr. Bones Need to Leave Me Alone*, a program that looks at the complex history of minstrelsy in American music and how it relates to music of today.

Rhiannon Giddens is a celebrated artist who excavates the past to reveal bold and candid truths about our present. She has performed for the Obamas at the White House, acted in two seasons of the hit television series *Nashville*, and was recently featured in Ken Burns's *Country Music* series on PBS. In 2019, Ms. Giddens released two albums: the Grammy-nominated *there is no Other*

with Francesco Turrisi, and *Songs of Our Native Daughters*, a collaborative project that tells the stories of historic black womanhood and survival. Her acclaimed solo albums, *Tomorrow Is My Turn* (along with the EP *Factory Girl*, produced by T Bone Burnett) and *Freedom Highway*, received three Grammy nominations, and her work with the Carolina Chocolate Drops (which she co-founded) received a Grammy in 2010. Ms. Giddens's musical fingerprints are found on a wide range of projects, from composing the music for the Nashville Ballet's adaptation of *Lucy Negro, Redux* to her opera *Omar*, based on the life and autobiography of Omar Ibn Said, which makes its world premiere at the Spoleto Festival this spring. She is also the host of *Aria Code*, a podcast series presented by WQXR, the Metropolitan Opera, and WNYC.

Ms. Giddens, who first performed at Carnegie Hall in 2017, has also been an active collaborator in education and social impact programs created by the Hall's Weill Music Institute (WMI). Her *Freedom Highway* album was launched in 2017 with a concert at Sing Sing Correctional Facility, part of Carnegie Hall's Musical Connections program. In spring 2018, she was featured in *A Time Like This: Music for Change*, a concert presented by WMI during the Hall's festival, *The '60s: The Years that Changed America*. Also in 2018, Ms. Giddens was among major artists featured on *Hopes & Dreams*, an album of lullabies written by New York parents through Carnegie Hall's Lullaby Project, released by Decca Gold.

Friday, October 23 at 6:30 PM and 9:30 PM | Weill

Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi: When I Am Laid in Earth

Reimagining the Popular Roots of Classical Music

Rhiannon Giddens, Vocals | Francesco Turrisi, Piano

Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi share conservatory beginnings and a boundless musical curiosity. In Weill Recital Hall, they reinvent the voice-and-piano recital with an eye to tearing down the artificial boundaries between classical and vernacular music. Drawing on diverse sources—such as American and Italian folk music, early Baroque songs, classical arrangements of African American spirituals, original songs, and deconstructed opera arias—they show the fluidity between the classical and popular sound.

Thursday, January 14 at 7:30 PM | Zankel

Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi: there is no Other

Rhiannon Giddens, Banjo, Fiddle, and Vocals
Francesco Turrisi, Percussion and Piano | Jason Sypher, Bass

Hear how musical traditions are rooted in shared human experiences. Love, loss, yearning, and joy are felt alike, and every culture expresses them in powerful music. Rhiannon Giddens, “an electrifying artist” (*Smithsonian*), and multi-instrumentalist Francesco Turrisi explore a vast range of traditions from Africa, Europe, and America—including blues, folk, and opera—to reveal how we are all connected through music.

Friday, March 12 at 8 PM | Stern/Perelman

Rhiannon Giddens and Friends: Songs of Our Native Daughters

Rhiannon Giddens, Banjo, Fiddle, and Vocals | Amythyst Kiah, Banjo, Guitar, and Vocals | Leyla McCalla, Banjo, Cello, and Vocals | Allison Russell, Banjo, Clarinet, and Vocals

Rhiannon Giddens teams up with kindred banjo players as Our Native Daughters, an extraordinary project whose debut album *Songs of Our Native Daughters* shines new light on African American women’s stories of struggle, resistance, and hope. Drawing from 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-century sources, they reimagine our collective past and create new stories for our time. With unflinching, razor-sharp honesty, they confront frequently sanitized views about America’s history of slavery, racism, and misogyny from a powerful, black female perspective.

Friday, April 23 at 9 PM | Zankel

Rhiannon Giddens and Friends: Mr. Bones Need to Leave Me Alone

Banjos, Minstrelsy, and Rap

Rhiannon Giddens, Fiddle and Vocals | Demeanor, MC
Francesco Turrisi, Tambourine | Rowan Corbett, Bones
Greg Adams, Banjo | Jason Sypher, Bass

Rhiannon Giddens shatters centuries-long misconceptions about the music of minstrelsy. In a fascinating musical journey, she explores its African American roots and complicated cross-cultural beginnings, its theatrical development and distortion by white musicians wearing blackface, and its impact on contemporary music. Giddens and a group of outstanding musicians educate and entertain as they reclaim minstrelsy and set it in its place as important early American music.



Francesco Turrisi, Jason Sypher, and Rhiannon Giddens