



AGAVE: IN HER HANDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

Following their GRAMMY®-nominated success with *American Originals: A New World, A New Canon*, AGAVE and Acis producer Geoffrey Silver offer another powerful recording of music by underrepresented composers, *AGAVE: In Her Hands*. Acclaimed soprano **MICHELE KENNEDY** joins AGAVE for her solo recording debut in a celebration of music by women from throughout history. The works range from an emotionally-charged lament by Baroque virtuosa Barbara Strozzi to the arresting and intimate songs of Black American composers Florence Price and Margaret Bonds. Together, AGAVE and Kennedy weave a tapestry of four centuries of music, telling women's stories through poetry and sound, in images of love, motherhood, and the Feminine Divine.

“This album exemplifies how I want to move in this field: in a way that honors the resilience of our ancestors, that celebrates our collective bravery and emotional breadth, and that is inspired by the commanding, healing, and deeply compassionate role of the divine feminine in our lives and its potential for humanity.” Michele Kennedy, soprano

Founded in 2008, AGAVE is an “an energized, free-spirited group” (*Early Music America*) based in the San Francisco Bay Area, specializing in string chamber music of the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. The ensemble has received numerous awards and accolades and gained local and national attention for its “brilliant and knowing” (*Gramophone*) and “precise and stylish” (*American Record Guide*) playing with “a certain let-down-your-hair quality” (*AllMusic*). Now in its fourteenth season, AGAVE continues its fruitful affiliations with star countertenor Reginald L. Mobley, soprano Michele Kennedy, and GRAMMY®-nominated producer Geoffrey Silver of the Acis record label, making a name for themselves as a unique and innovative voice in the nation's chamber music community.

AGAVE has released three albums with Reginald L. Mobley. On the VGo Recordings label, **Queen of Heaven: the Music of Isabella Leonarda** (2015) and **Peace in Our Time** (2018). **American Originals: A New World, A New Canon** (2021), their first recording on Acis, secured the ensemble's first GRAMMY® nomination and garnered rave reviews from *Gramophone*, *EMag*, *American Record Guide*, *MusicWeb International*, *The Whole Note*, and *Textura*. It was a *BBC Music Magazine* Brief Notes Recording of the Week, WCLV's 2022 Recording of the Year, and “The White Rose” was featured in a *New York Times* article about Florence Price's 135th birthday. The ensemble is represented in the USA by **Schwalbe and Partners**.

The performers are MICHELE KENNEDY (soprano), AARON WESTMAN (violin, co-dir), ANNA WASHBURN (violin), KATHERINE KYME (viola), CYNTHIA KEIKO BLACK (viola), WILLIAM SKEEN (cello, viola da gamba), KEVIN COOPER (guitar, theorbo), HENRY LEBEDINSKY (organ, piano, harpsichord, co-dir.).

ALBUM RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

DPK:

<https://www.acisproductions.com/agave-in-her-hands-press>

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ALBUM COVER ART:

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