



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 3, 2025

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC OPENING GALA**  
**Featuring CÉCILE McLORIN SALVANT**  
**Wu Tsai Theater, David Geffen Hall, September 25, 2025**

**Conducted by Anthony Parnter**

**Honoring Vera Blinken and the Memory of  
Ambassador Donald Blinken**

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The New York Philharmonic will hold its annual Opening Gala and Concert on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at the Wu Tsai Theater, David Geffen Hall. **Cécile McLorin Salvant** — the three-time Grammy Award-winning jazz vocalist — will appear as soloist, in her NY Phil debut, singing an eclectic program of works by Purcell, Sondheim, Fauré, Bizet, and others. **Anthony Parnter** will conduct the concert, which will also include two purely orchestral works: Gershwin’s *Strike Up the Band* Overture, which opens the program; and Ellington’s *Black, Brown, and Beige*, which closes it.

This year’s Gala will honor arts leaders and philanthropists **Vera Blinken and the memory of Ambassador Donald Blinken**. Donald Blinken served as United States Ambassador to Hungary, 1994–98, and from 1986 was a NY Phil Board Member. During her time in Hungary while her husband was Ambassador, Vera Blinken founded Primavera, the first mobile breast cancer screening program in Central / Eastern Europe, and she currently serves as Director Emerita at the NY Phil. Vera and Donald Blinken have supported the NY Phil for decades. Their generosity has enriched the Orchestra’s educational initiatives, global touring, endowment campaigns, and legacy planning.

Gala events will include a cocktail reception at 5:30 p.m. on the Leon and Norma Hess Grand Promenade; the concert, which begins at 7:00 p.m.; and a seated dinner, attended by the artists, immediately following the performance, also on the Hess Grand Promenade. Gala dress will be black tie. The Gala Co-Chairs are **Carole and John French, Linda and Mitch Hart, Monica and Jasvinder Khaira, and Sylvia Tóth**.

**Biographies**

[Anthony Parnter](#), [Cécile McLorin Salvant](#), [New York Philharmonic](#)

**Tickets**

Tickets to New York Philharmonic performances may be purchased online at [nyphil.org](https://nyphil.org) or by

calling **(212) 875-5656**, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday; and noon to 5:00 p.m. Sunday. Tickets may also be purchased at the **Welcome Center at David Geffen Hall**. The Welcome Center opens at 10:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday, and at noon on Sunday. On performance evenings, the Welcome Center closes one-half hour after performance time; other evenings it closes at 6:00 p.m.

For more information about the entire Gala evening, please visit [nyphil.org/openinggala](http://nyphil.org/openinggala), call the Office of Special Events at (646) 870-4054, or email [events@nyphil.org](mailto:events@nyphil.org).

For press tickets, contact Lanore Carr at (212) 875-5714 or [carrl@nyphil.org](mailto:carrl@nyphil.org).

### **Event Listing**

## **OPENING GALA: ANTHONY PARNTER AND CÉCILE McLORIN SALVANT**

Wu Tsai Theater, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center

Thursday, September 25, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

Anthony Parnter, conductor  
Cécile McLorin Salvant\*, vocalist

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| GERSHWIN / Arr. D. Rose            | <i>Strike Up the Band Overture</i>                     |
| WEILL / Arr. D.J. Argue            | <i>Barbara Song</i>                                    |
| GERSHWIN                           | <i>There's a Boat That's Leaving Soon for New York</i> |
| PURCELL                            | <i>Dido's Lament (When I Am Laid in Earth)</i>         |
| COLEMAN & ZIPPEL / Arr. D.J. Argue | <i>With Every Breath I Take, from City of Angels</i>   |
| SONDHEIM / Arr. D.J. Argue         | <i>Being Alive</i>                                     |
| FAURÉ                              | <i>Au bord de l'eau</i>                                |
| BIZET                              | <i>Seguidilla (Près des remparts de Seville)</i>       |
| ELLINGTON / Orch. M. Peress        | <i>Black, Brown, and Beige</i>                         |

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*\*New York Philharmonic debut*

### **ALL PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

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The 2025–26 season is sponsored by **Leni and Peter May**.

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Programs are made possible, in part, by the **New York State Council on the Arts** with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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Photography and video are available in the New York Philharmonic's online press room, [nyphil.org/pressroom](https://nyphil.org/pressroom), or by contacting the Public Relations Department at (212) 875-5700 or [pr@nyphil.org](mailto:pr@nyphil.org).

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