

Cécile McLorin Salvant

2021 NAFME All-National
Jazz Ensemble Soloist

Cécile McLorin Salvant, is a composer, singer, and visual artist. The late Jessye Norman described Salvant as “a unique voice supported by an intelligence and full-fledged musicality, which light up every note she sings”. Salvant has developed a passion for storytelling and finding the connections between vaudeville, blues, folk traditions from around the world, theater, jazz, and baroque music. Salvant is an eclectic curator, unearthing rarely recorded, forgotten songs with strong narratives, interesting power dynamics, unexpected twists, and humor. Salvant won the Thelonious Monk competition in 2010. She has received Grammy Awards for Best Jazz Vocal Album for her 3 latest albums, “The Window”, “Dreams and Daggers”, and “For One To Love”, and was nominated for the award in 2014 for her album “WomanChild”.

In 2020, Salvant received the MacArthur fellowship and the Doris Duke Artist Award.

Born and raised in Miami, Florida, of a French mother and Haitian father, she started classical piano studies at 5, sang in a children’s choir at 8, and started classical voice lessons as a teenager.

Salvant received a bachelor’s in French law from the Université Pierre-Mendes France in Grenoble while also studying baroque music and jazz at the Darius Milhaud Music Conservatory in Aix-en-Provence, France.

Salvant’s latest work, *Ogresse*, is a musical fable in the form of a cantata that blends genres (folk, baroque, jazz, country). Salvant wrote the story, lyrics, and music. It is arranged by Darcy James Argue for a thirteen-piece orchestra of multi-instrumentalists. *Ogresse*, both a biomythography and an homage to the *Erzulie* (as painted by Gerard Fortune) and Sara Baartman, explores fetishism, hunger, diaspora, cycles of appropriation, lies, othering, and ecology. It is in development to become an animated feature-length film, which Salvant will direct.

Salvant makes large-scale textile drawings. Her visual art can now be found at Picture Room in Brooklyn, NY.

