Pianist Bruce Levingston confronts art, race, and politics in three major premieres at Carnegie Hall and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. in 2016

The acclaimed pianist celebrates the 15th Anniversary of Premiere Commission, the music organization he founded to promote and commission new music, with premieres of James Matheson’s Windows and Nolan Gasser’s An American Citizen and Repast: An Oratorio in Honor of Mr. Booker Wright at New York’s Zankel Hall on Monday, April 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Celebrated for his “mastery of color and nuance” (The New York Times) and his “inventive and glamorous programming” (The New Yorker), the intrepid pianist Bruce Levingston has now commissioned two powerful works that honor the lives of Civil Rights era figure Booker Wright in the moving oratorio Repast and John Wesley Washington, who was born into slavery and became the subject of the famous painting An American Citizen. Levingston brings an eloquent voice to these figures who for so long had none. These poignant new works tackle the explosive politics of race and citizenship from the past as well as the present by addressing the still-burning question of who is an American citizen.

The premiere of Nolan Gasser’s Repast, with Levingston at the piano, will feature guest artist bass-baritone Justin Hopkins portraying Booker Wright with a libretto by PEN/Faulkner Award winner Kevin Young. The concert will also include world premieres of Gasser’s An American Citizen, as well as James Matheson’s Windows. Gasser was inspired by Southern artist Marie Hull’s important painting of the same name, which depicts former slave John Wesley Washington. Windows was inspired by the exquisite stained glass windows of Marc Chagall and Henri Matisse, commissioned by the Rockefeller family for the Union Church of Pocantico Hills.

Levingston will also take An American Citizen to Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, April 6 where he will appear at Georgetown University’s Gaston Hall with university president John DeGioia. His performance of the work will be paired with a discussion about the painting and its subject that inspired the music, as well as the artist Marie Hull, subject of Levingston’s new book, Bright Fields: The Mastery of Marie Hull.
Other appearances for Levingston this spring include his exciting creative partnership on Wednesday-Sunday, March 2-6 with globally acclaimed ballerina Alessandra Ferri and star principal of American Ballet Theatre Herman Cornejo. Heralded as “one of the most cherished ballerinas of our time” and one of “the most miraculous artists” (The New York Times), Ferri and Cornejo join Levingston to create TRIO ConcertDance at The Joyce Theater, an intimate, haunting program of commissioned work by the inventive, esteemed choreographers Russell Maliphant, resident artist of Sadler’s Wells; Stanton Welch of Houston Ballet; Demis Volpi, resident choreographer of Stuttgart Ballet; and Fang-Yi Sheu, from Taiwan. Choreography is set to the music of Bach, Chopin, Glass, Ligeti and Ravel, with Ferri and Cornejo incorporating the piano into their performance. The evening closes with renowned French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj’s heartbreaking “Le Parc” with music by Mozart.

Complete Schedule:

- TRIO ConcertDance with Alessandra Ferri, Herman Cornejo and Bruce Levingston—Wednesday-Sunday, March 2-6, 2016—The Joyce Theater (NY)—visit The Joyce website for performance time

- 15th Anniversary of Premiere Commission with pianist Bruce Levingston—Monday, April 4, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.—Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall

- Creating An American Citizen—Wednesday, April 6, 2016 at 5 p.m.—Gaston Hall, Georgetown University (Washington, DC)

Bruce Levingston is a concert pianist and one of the country’s leading figures in contemporary classical music. He is known for his “extraordinary gifts as a colorist and a performer who can hold attention rapt with the softest playing” (MusicWeb International). Many of the world’s most important composers have written works for him, and his Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center world premiere performances have won notable critical acclaim. The New York Times calls him one of “today’s most adventurous musicians” and The New Yorker proclaimed him “a poetic pianist with a gift for inventive—and glamorous programing” and “a force for new music.”

Levingston’s recordings have also received high critical praise. His recent album Heavy Sleep was named one of the Best Classical Recordings of 2015 by The New York Times, which called the album “tender” and “exquisite.” England’s The Arts Desk called the disc “sublime” and Gramophone declared his playing “masterly.”
Levingston is the founder and artistic director of the music foundation **Premiere Commission, Inc.**, which has commissioned and premiered over 50 new works.

Noted for his creative programming, he has worked with some of the most gifted artists of our time, including painter Chuck Close, composer Philip Glass, authors George Plimpton and Michael Cunningham, actor Ethan Hawke, Colin and Eric Jacobsen and the Brooklyn Rider, dancers Alessandra Ferri and Herman Cornejo, and choreographers Jorma Elo, Russell Maliphant, and Alexei Ratmansky.

Levingston has also collaborated with numerous prominent cultural institutions on programs related to art, film and music including the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of Art, Alliance Française/French Institute, Rooftop Films, The Aspen Institute and Aspen Music Festival, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Long interested in human rights and education, Levingston collaborated on the commission and world premiere of the oratorio, *Repast*, based on the life of the civil rights figure Booker Wright. Levingston is also the author of *Bright Fields: The Mastery of Marie Hull*, a biography and study of the famed Mississippi-born painter who created “An American Citizen.”

He maintains residences in his home state of Mississippi as well as in New York City.