

Rhiannon Giddens: Oberlin Stage Left

by Staff



Rhiannon Giddens, a 2000 Oberlin Conservatory alumna who has forged a remarkable — and remarkably wide-ranging — career in music, returns to her Oberlin roots for an appearance on [Oberlin Stage Left](#) on Thursday, December 10 at 7:30 pm.

She will perform with multi-instrumentalist Francesco Turrisi, with whom she created her most recent recording. Their set will span traditional

Irish and Scottish tunes, as well as blues, bluegrass, gospel, and more. It will be preceded by a conversation between Giddens and music theory professor Jan Miyake that touches on the performer's career and her longstanding commitment to social justice issues.

A former voice student at Oberlin, Giddens is co-founder of the Grammy Award-winning country-blues ensemble Carolina Chocolate Drops, for which she is the lead singer, violinist, and banjo player. A native of North Carolina, she has also released a pair of acclaimed solo albums, *Tomorrow Is My Turn* and *Freedom Highway*, and has collaborated on numerous well-received projects including *Lost on the River: The New Basement Tapes*, a 2014 recording of previously unreleased music by Bob Dylan she made with Elvis Costello, Marcus Mumford, and others. Her most recent recording, *there is no Other* (2019), is a collaboration with Turrisi.

In 2017, Giddens was named a MacArthur Fellow, recognition she earned for her efforts in reclaiming African American contributions to folk music and other styles, and identifying new connections between modern music and sounds of the past. In

summer 2020, Giddens became artistic director of Silkroad, the multicultural arts organization founded by Yo-Yo Ma.

“She is gifted with a voice of rare beauty that deeply touches those who hear her, and she has the imagination to create musical ideas that are fresh and unerringly honest,” voice professor Marlene Rosen, Giddens’ mentor at Oberlin, said in 2017. “She is a highly intelligent woman, but more than that, a person of substance and integrity, respected and loved by her peers.”

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