

## American tenor Lawrence Brownlee wows Festival audience

Dubrovnik, 7 August 2021 – Leading American tenor and bel canto star **Lawrence Brownlee**, along with pianist **Vesna Podrug Kossjanenko**, wowed the Festival audiences **last night, 6 August** in the packed atrium of the Rector's Palace in one of the most eagerly awaited concerts at the 72<sup>nd</sup> Dubrovnik Summer Festival.

In his first performance not only at the Festival but in this corner of Europe, Lawrence Brownlee, known for his peerless interpretations of Donizetti and Rossini, has shown all the decadence and power of the human voice in his especially lyrical and fastidious performance of technically challenging runs, singing them with an ease of a true master of his art. Embodying every note and word of a repertoire he said is close to his heart, Brownlee barely even had to look at the notes, all the emotions expressed clearly on his face and coursing through every gesture. The evening began with **Verdi's** solo songs: the rapturous *Ad una stella*, cheerful jig *Lo spazzacamino*, sentimental *Il tramonto* and a merry drinking song titled *Brindisi* followed by a ballad tone set by **Liszt's** *Three Petrarch sonnets*, which was again contrasted by the lively tarantella *La danza* from **Rossini's** musical soirée collection. The second half of the programme saw Brownlee perform arias from Donizetti's operas: *Spirto gentil* from *La favorite (The Favourite)*, *Una furtiva lacrima* from *L'elisir d'amore (The Elixir of Love)* and *Ah, mes amis* from *La fille du regiment (The Daughter of the Regiment)*. Ending the evening on a high note, Brownlee sang Canzoni napoletane or Neapolitan songs which included the always popular *O sole mio*. The superb American tenor won the audience over with a first-rate vocal performance, excellent diction, cheerful energy and openness – communicating happily with the audience about the pieces he is performing, about himself and Dubrovnik, praising the city's rich history and stunning beauty calling it a "goldmine". Superb piano accompaniment by Vesna Podrug Kossjanenko complimented Brownlee's elegant tenor perfectly and the audience couldn't contain their delight, giving a deservedly lengthy applause. The evening ended on a high note with two quintessentially American musical additions, Mario Lanza hits from the 1950s *Because* and the popular tune *Be my love* from the film *The Toast of New Orleans*.

The next Rector's Palace concert is set for Tuesday, 10 August at 9.30pm when the unique programme "**Dubrovnik on a Rock of Music**" will gather an exciting ensemble of top Dubrovnik musicians under the baton of **mo. Tomislav Fačini**. The soloist of the evening are **Lovro Merčep** on saxophone, **Marija Grazio** on piano and mezzosoprano **Dubravka Šeparović Mušović**, performing pieces by Debussy, Ibert, Đurović and Mahler.

The Dubrovnik Summer Festival –the centre of Croatian and global spirit and culture, a place of creation and not just a place of visit, a place of community, ideas and new artistic expressions, is traditionally supported this year by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, the City of Dubrovnik, the Dubrovnik-neretva county and numerous other sponsors and benefactors who helped bring this most prestigious cultural event in Croatia to fruition.

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