

# PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Announcing the 2020 Molly Blank Concert Series Celebrating Love, Leonard Cohen and Moms

ATLANTA — The Breman Museum’s seventh annual Molly Blank Concert Series will kick off February 16, 2020, with an exciting lineup of performances. The series once again will feature outstanding Jewish contributions to music in the Breman’s own auditorium.

“We are really excited about this year’s series, which features music” said Leslie Gordon, executive director of the Breman. “Our partners and staff searched the world for great entertainment, and we won’t let people down. Everyone can expect to sing along, reminisce and swing to great music performed by some of the most talented musicians in America.”

The season opens with “Let’s Fall in Love,” featuring the Joe Alterman Trio and special guest Lena Seikaly. Billed as a “sweet afternoon filled with music and romance,” the roughly 90-minute show will include love-themed songs from the “Great American Songbook.” Expect to hear unique renditions of tunes from legends like Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole and Ella Fitzgerald.

The concert marks a return to the Molly Blank series for Alterman, who performed in a side role in one of last year’s shows. A world-renowned jazz pianist, Alterman grew up in Atlanta and graduated from New York University’s Steinhardt School. He has shared the stage with icons like Les McCann, Ramsey Lewis, Dick Gregory and Wynton Marsalis in world-class venues, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City. Lewis has called him “an inspiration to me” and his

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piano playing “a joy to behold.” Alterman currently serves as executive director of the Atlanta Jewish Music Festival, which is partnering with the Breman in presenting the show.

“Let’s Fall in Love” marks the Atlanta debut for Seikaly, a Palestinian singer from Washington. She and Alterman met several years ago when they were paired for a concert in Maryland.

“Lena is one of my favorite singers to work with,” said Alterman. “She has a rare talent and is really special. She’s an incredible singer who really knows how to tell a story.”

The Washington Post calls Keikaly “one of the local jazz scene’s most promising performers” and “one of the brightest voices in jazz.” She performs frequently as a soloist alongside the city's top orchestras and choirs, has performed with her own trio at the Kennedy Center and other acclaimed venues and has taught and led workshops at several prestigious performing arts schools. The classically-trained operatic mezzo-soprano studied at the University of Maryland School of Music.

Rounding out the Joe Alterman Trio will be bassist Robby Handley and drummer Justin Chesarek, both based in Atlanta. “Robby and Justin are fabulous,” said Alterman. “They’re two of my favorite people and musicians.”

To learn more about Alterman, visit [joaltermanmusic.com](http://joaltermanmusic.com). To learn about Seikaly, visit [lenaseikaly.com](http://lenaseikaly.com).

The series continues on Sunday, April 26, 2020, with “Perla Batalla in the House of Cohen.” Batalla, a Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter from Los Angeles, sang back up for Leonard Cohen. One of the most fascinating and enigmatic—if not the most successful—singer-songwriters of the late 1960s, Cohen retained an audience across six decades of music-making and poetry. Batalla will share special songs and personal anecdotes from her time and travels on the road with her mentor, who passed away in November 2016.

“Perla Batalla is a gloriously rich mixture of backgrounds, and she brings them with her to the stage with her gorgeous voice full of love, life, mournfulness and joy,” according to [NoHoartsdistrict.com](http://NoHoartsdistrict.com). “It’s a heady combination and one that works to perfection with Cohen's particular gifts.”

Batalla has toured the world with her tribute to the legend, whom she credits for helping to launch her career. Comfortable speaking both English and Spanish, she has earned critical acclaim for her “unique voice” and “culture-merging compositions.” Batalla has recorded seven albums, been featured in films and television, and performed in some of the world’s most celebrated venues.

To learn more about Batalla, visit [perla.com](http://perla.com).

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Finally, the Breman will celebrate Mother's Day on Sunday, May 10, 2020, with "On the Sunny Side of the Street: The Songs of Dorothy Fields." A lyricist and author, Fields became one of the few women who worked in the 1920s and 1930s songwriting field to create multiple standards in musical theater. As a lyricist, Fields wrote with Jerome Kern. As a librettist, she wrote the book for *Annie Get Your Gun* and collaborated with Irving Berlin. Across her career, she worked closely with many more Broadway greats, including Fred Astaire, Oscar Hammerstein II, Ethel Merman, Cole Porter, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Richard Rodgers and Gwen Verdon.

"Unlike many peers, Fields managed to stay relevant late into her career, through the 1960s, writing *Sweet Charity* along with Neil Simon and Cy Coleman, and Bob Fosse directing the show," said Adam Koplan, a New York City and Atlanta-based writer/director and the founding artistic director of The Flying Carpet Theatre Company. "When the Songwriters' Hall of Fame began its induction ceremonies in 1971, it included some of the most well-known names in American music: Duke Ellington, Ira Gershwin and Alan Jay Lerner. The only woman in the group was Dorothy Fields."

Koplan, who has directed numerous productions in Atlanta, including several at the Breman, over the years, is writing, directing and coproducing the show with Atlanta Audible. If not for Fields, he said, we wouldn't have some of the best-known songs in American theater.

The concert will blend songs as well as amusing and poignant anecdotes, painting a picture of Fields' genius and trailblazing accomplishments. The cast and band, featuring seven accomplished local musicians and musical theater veterans, will play classic tunes from her song list, such as "On the Sunny Side of the Street," "The Way You Look Tonight," "You Can't Get a Man With A Gun," "Big Spender" and "If My Friends Could See Me Now."

Each concert in the series will be preceded by a reception with refreshments and will be followed by a meet-and-greet session with the performers. The receptions will start at 4 p.m., with the performances at 5 p.m.

*The Molly Blank Concert Series is made possible by the Molly Blank Fund of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation.*

Tickets and Information: <https://www.thebreman.org/Events/2019-Molly-Blank-Concert-Series>  
or call 678-222-3700.

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**About the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum**

The Breman Museum, a preeminent cultural center in the Southeast, connects people of all backgrounds in understanding and appreciation of Jewish history, culture and arts. Its midtown Atlanta location hosts a permanent Holocaust exhibition highlighting the resilience of local survivors as well as comprehensive archives on Southern Jewish History, the most extensive of their kind. The museum's galleries are a showcase for exclusive exhibitions and compelling displays. Known for its events, concerts, lectures, genealogy resources, educational workshops and enlightening tours for visitors of all ages, the Breman Museum welcomes the public to view its galleries Sunday through Thursday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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**Graphic Assets and Photographs:** <https://bit.ly/2tCUB4t>

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**Info and Tickets at [TheBreman.org](http://TheBreman.org)  
or call 678.222.3700**

**The Breman Museum Presents**  
**MOLLY BLANK CONCERT SERIES**  
*Celebrating Jewish Contributions to Music*

		
<b>Feb 16</b> <b>LET'S FALL IN LOVE</b> <i>Joe Alterman Trio with Special Guest Lena Seikaly</i>	<b>April 26</b> <b>PERLA BATALLA</b> <i>In The House of Cohen A Tribute to Leonard Cohen</i>	<b>May 10</b> <b>MOTHER'S DAY Special Performance</b> <b>ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET</b> <i>The Songs of Dorothy Fields</i>

**THE MOLLY BLANK FUND**  
OF THE ARTHUR M. BLANK FAMILY FOUNDATION

  
the **Breman**  
MUSEUM  
*Jewish History, Culture and Arts*

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