



THE HARLEM CHAMBER PLAYERS PRESENT

THE ORDERING OF MOSES

A MONUMENTAL ORATORIO FOR
SOLOISTS, CHOIR, ORGAN, AND ORCHESTRA



FRIDAY JUNE 17, 2022 • 7:30PM ET
THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH



Tonight's concert is dedicated to the memory of Jessye Norman (1945 – 2019), who was a mentor to tonight's music director and conductor Damien Sneed. Ms. Norman was to be the guest of honor for this concert when it was originally planned for June 2020.

It is a tremendous honor to dedicate this performance of Nathaniel Dett's *Ordering of Moses* and the world premiere of my arrangement of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* to my mentor, the late Jessye Norman. I vividly remember my first time seeing her perform on television as a young child in our hometown, Augusta, GA. Immediately after the Live from Lincoln Center performance broadcast featuring Ms. Norman, my parents told me how she sang "Moon River" at their wedding the summer after her freshman year at our alma mater, Howard University. At times, I become emotionally overwhelmed remembering my last conversation with her before her untimely transition just a few blocks from The Riverside Church. Yet, my spirit is deeply moved and overjoyed that she was not only one of the greatest singers, but she also took time to personally mentor me, give me her blessings, and tell me that it was my turn to continue much of what she started.

—Damien Sneed

PROGRAM

Damien Sneed, Music Director and Conductor
with The Harlem Chamber Players and
Special Guests, Chorale Le Chateau

Lift Every Voice and Sing.....J. Rosamund Johnson
(World Premiere Arrangement by Damien Sneed)

Janinah Burnett, Soprano Soloist

Herr Gott, dich loben wir.....Johann Sebastian Bach

The Ordering of Moses.....R. Nathaniel Dett

Brandie Sutton, Soprano (Miriam)

Krysty Swann, Alto (Voice of Israel)

Chauncey Packer, Tenor (Moses)

Kenneth Overton, Baritone (The Word)

1. Introduction
2. All Israel's Children
3. O Lord, Behold My Affliction
4. God Looked on Israel
5. And from a Burning Bush
6. Lord, Who Am I?
7. Who Hath Made a Man Dumb?
8. Orchestra Interlude
9. And When Moses Smote the Water
10. March of the Israelites
11. The Egyptians Pursue
12. And When They Reached the Other Shore
13. Come Let Us Praise Jehovah
14. Sing Ye to Jehovah
15. He Is King of Kings

PROGRAM NOTES

Lift Every Voice

John Rosamund Johnson (1873 – 1954)

Often referred to as “The Black National Anthem,” *Lift Every Voice and Sing* was a hymn written as a poem by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson in 1900. His brother, John Rosamond Johnson (1873 – 1954), composed the music for the lyrics. A choir of 500 school children at the segregated Stanton School, where James Weldon Johnson was principal, first performed the song in public in Jacksonville, Florida to celebrate President Abraham Lincoln’s birthday.

At the turn of the 20th century, Johnson’s lyrics eloquently captured the solemn yet hopeful appeal for the liberty of Black Americans. Set against the religious invocation of God and the promise of freedom, the song was later adopted by NAACP and prominently used as a rallying cry during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

(www.naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/lift-every-voice-and-sing)

Tonight’s rendition was arranged by Damien Sneed.

A group of young men in Jacksonville, Florida, arranged to celebrate Lincoln’s birthday in 1900. My brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and I decided to write a song to be sung at the exercises. I wrote the words and he wrote the music. Our New York publisher, Edward B. Marks, made mimeographed copies for us, and the song was taught to and sung by a chorus of five hundred colored school children.

Shortly afterwards my brother and I moved away from Jacksonville to New York, and the song passed out of our minds. But the school children of Jacksonville kept singing it; they went off to other schools and sang it; they became teachers and taught it to other children. Within twenty years it was being sung over the South and in some other parts of the country. Today the song, popularly known as the Negro National Hymn, is quite generally used.

The lines of this song repay me in an elation, almost of exquisite anguish, whenever I hear them sung by Negro children.

—James Weldon Johnson

(www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46549/lift-every-voice-and-sing)

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Lyrics by James Weldon Johnson (1871 – 1938)

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.

Herr Gott, dich loben wir (Lord God, Thy Praise We Sing)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

“The final aim and reason of all music is nothing other than the glorification of God and the refreshment of the spirit.”—J.S. Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach is universally recognized as one of the greatest composers of all time. Bach’s music has created an enormous impact on generations of composers and performers as well as on music lovers of all kinds. He is unequalled in his mastery of compositional technique and in the profoundness of his musical ideas.

Bach wrote prolifically for the church. He spent most of his professional life in church positions as a composer, choir director and organist. His numerous concertos and cantatas (large works for chorus, orchestra and vocal soloists) are fine examples of his great musical skill as well as his ability to evoke deep emotion. After his death in 1750, Bach’s reputation as a composer at first declined. Then, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Bach was recognized and promoted by prominent composers, such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Frédéric Chopin, Robert Schumann, and Felix Mendelssohn.

Bach was originally buried at Old St. John’s Cemetery in Leipzig, but his grave went unmarked for nearly 150 years. In 1894, his remains were located and moved to a vault in St. John’s Church, but the building was destroyed by Allied bombing during World War II. Once more, his remains were rescued and re-buried, this time in the altar-room of St. Thomaskirche, where he ended his career and where they remain today.

TEXT

Herr Gott, dich loben wir,	Lord God, we praise you,
Herr Gott, wir danken dir.	Lord God, we thank you.
Dich, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit,	You, God the Father in eternity,
Ehret die Welt weit und breit.	are honoured by the world far and wide.

— From Cantata BWV 16 (Chorus)

The Ordering of Moses

Robert Nathaniel Dett (1882 – 1943)

Robert Nathaniel Dett's monumental oratorio *The Ordering of Moses* is considered a landmark work in the African-American classical music repertory, considered in its day to be one of the most accomplished works by a Black composer.

The music and text, derived “from scripture and folklore,” is a retelling of Moses leading his people out of captivity and into the promised land. Dett compiled the text of his sacred cantata from the Old Testament, telling of the Israelites' enslavement in Egypt, and how Moses was instructed by God to lead his people to freedom. It's a vivid piece of musical storytelling, a sequence of solo arias and dramatic choral numbers, underpinned by pungent orchestral colors that progress from the dark despair of the opening, strikingly colored by cellos and bassoons, to the brassy exuberance of the final moments, when Moses and his sister Miriam lead the Israelites in a celebration of their freedom.

Born in 1882, the grandson of slaves, in the historic slave refuge of Drummondville (now Niagara Falls, Ontario), Dett and his family moved across the Rainbow Bridge into Niagara Falls, NY. Ultimately, it was Rochester NY's Clarissa Street neighborhood which Dett called home. Dett fully immersed himself in Rochester, serving as president of its NAACP, forming choirs at the Clarissa St. YWCA, and directing music at Trinity Presbyterian (now Trinity Emmanuel) and Mt. Olivet Baptist churches.

Born in the same year as composers Percy Grainger, Zoltan Kodály and Igor Stravinsky, Dett's chosen livelihood was as a composer, pianist and choral conductor; the latter at churches and then as choir director at the Hampton Institute in Virginia and Bennett College in North Carolina. He was the first Black recipient of a Bachelor of Music Degree at Oberlin in 1908. Later in his life Dett also became the first Black graduate of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester (1932). *The Ordering of Moses* was begun as his Doctoral Dissertation at Eastman, and in 1937, it was premiered by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at the Cincinnati May festival.

The performance was also broadcast live across the entire United States on NBC radio. And yet the network inexplicably stopped the live broadcast suddenly three-quarters of the way through, claiming a scheduling conflict.

The monumental work depicts biblical scenes of the enslaved Israelites, Moses being called by God to lead them out of bondage, the parting of the Red Sea, the

Egyptian pursuit and the Israelites rejoicing in their freedom. Dett's oratorio is based on one of the most famous Negro spirituals, "Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land. Tell Pharoah, 'Let my people go!'"

The melodic shapes and cadences of spirituals permeate the music, and "Go Down Moses" in particular, acts as a running theme throughout. The opening movement even features the clanking of chains, viscerally illustrating the Israelites' slavery. There is even fugal treatment of the theme similar to Bach of "Go Down Moses" in "And from a burning bush", one section of the work.

The gripping story of Moses leading the Israelites out of their Egyptian bondage is one of the great ancient pre-figurings of Christian redemption and salvation; for centuries and centuries, it has inspired works of art. The triumphant Exodus narrative is so rich and powerful that it can stand in for every possible journey of movement from dark to light, whether historical or contemporary, theological or psychological, religious or political. For thoughtful readers of this story, the terrible equation of sin and slavery is as obvious and profound as the identity of liberation with salvation.

Dett said that he wanted to create something for African Americans that would be "musically peculiarly their own and yet which would bear comparison with the nationalistic utterances of other people's work in the art form." As a youngster, he heard his grandmother sing spirituals, and he took piano lessons, studying Beethoven and other European classics. But it was not until he was a student at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio that he first had the idea of blending these 2 musical worlds.

In fact, Dett's successful fusion of two distinct inherited musical elements, the sacred oratorio on the one hand and the spiritual on the other, was, itself, the product of an old and important musical tradition: the conscious integration of centuries old folk material into formal music had long been both strategy and goal for many composers. Bach used old melodies, some of unknown folk origin, in his sacred chorales; Vaughan Williams mined folk music of the British Isles in creating a music that was distinctly English. Dett was especially influenced by Czech composer Antonín Dvořák, who, since his arrival in the United States in 1892 had been endeavoring to create a music that captured the essence of American identity and who, to that end, had been studying the songs and melodies of African and indigenous Americans and incorporating them in his work. Dett also looked to another man who was influenced by Dvořák, African-

British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor who made several visits to the United States.

Dett even wrote about Dvořák in his 1934 Etude autobiographical essay, “From Bell Stand to Throne Room.” When Dett was at Oberlin, his studies were financed in large part by patrons of the Cataract Hotel in Niagara Falls, where he was employed during the summers as a bell-hop and where he played the piano in his free time. That’s where Dett heard music by Dvořák for the first time, and he reported:

The most vivid and far-reaching memory I have of Oberlin was the result of a visit of the famous Kneisel String Quartet, who played as part of one of their programs a slow movement by Dvořák, based on traditional airs. Suddenly it seemed I heard again the frail sweet voice of my long departed grandmother, calling across the years; and, in a rush of emotion which stirred up my spirit to its very center, the meaning of the songs which had given her soul such peace was revealed to me.

Dett himself compiled a four-volume collection of spirituals, presenting important historical transcriptions alongside his own fusions of African and European idioms. Dett was one of several major composers of African descent then exploring spirituals for both their history and their capacity to inspire. Dett believed that spirituals, which were an outgrowth and a relic of slavery, were an expression of the Holy Spirit. He explained that when singers sang spirituals, “the glory of God” led their devout voices, even when the songs themselves were naive or quaint. He said, “I have attended meetings of old ex-slaves in the backwoods. Often times when singing, their very faces showed a self abnegation wholly different from that one sees upon the countenance of the average singer, evidencing that, borne on the wings of the song, they temporarily had entered another world.”

One author conjectures that in the atmosphere of the 1937 premiere of pervasive racism and segregation, “the greatest shock for the audience may have been Dett’s inclusion of the ‘Go Down Moses’ spiritual in the sacred oratorio. For some, it must have been thrilling and affirming; for others, it must have seemed unnerving at best and outrageous at worst.”

At the time of *The Ordering of Moses* premiere, R. Nathaniel Dett was very well known in many musical circles. He had been extraordinarily well educated and in 1919, Dett co-founded the National Association of Negro Musicians, and was its

president from 1924 to 1926. In 1920, he won the prestigious Bowdoin Prize at Harvard University for his four-chapter essay, "Negro Music." Dett also chaired the Music Department of Hampton Institute and led the Hampton Institute Choir on national and international tours from 1913 to 1931.

Dett also at one time studied in Paris with the renowned teacher Nadia Boulanger, and went on to become one of America's most respected teachers, composers and conductors. In 1930, his choir performed for President Herbert Hoover on the White House lawn, and made a tour of Europe that included several concerts in London. In an extended informal autobiographical essay written for *Etude* magazine in 1934, just three years before the May Festival premiere of *The Ordering of Moses*, Dett noted that when on tour in Europe in 1929, he was formally received by Duchess Elisabeth of Bavaria, Queen of Belgium, a famously astute patron of contemporary music, and by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and a number of the English nobility and foreign ambassadors at No. 10 Downing Street in London.

In 1938, apparently there was also a little known performance of *The Ordering of Moses* that took place at the Juilliard School, which at the time, was located at the same building that now houses Manhattan School of Music, a block away from tonight's performance. In 1956, the work was also revived and recorded by the Cincinnati Symphony with soprano Leontyne Price and baritone William Warfield. Liner notes for that 1956 recording with Leontyne Price, tells the story of the very first broadcast in 1937: "Near the end of the original acetate disc, the announcer can be heard saying, 'We are sorry indeed, ladies and gentlemen, but due to previous commitments, we are unable to remain for the closing moments of this excellent performance'."

In 2014, The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra again revived the piece, this time, recorded live at Carnegie Hall, conducted by James Conlon. The concert was also broadcast on WQXR. According to the program for that May 2014 concert, provided by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, a good deal more than the "closing moments" of the score were unheard. It has been suggested that these "previous commitments" were in fact a concession to objections voiced by callers to the network. The 1937 May Festival's performance of *The Ordering of Moses* was possibly the first network broadcast of a major work by an African-American composer. Indeed, WJZ in New York City had scheduled an hour for the broadcast, but only 40 minutes of the piece was heard, the rest of the allotted time was given over to organ music.

At the 2014 Carnegie Hall performance, the audience got to hear the actual May 1937 radio announcer's introduction of the piece right before it began. Then, later, at that precise moment when the 1937 broadcast shut down the live broadcast, the 2014 audience heard the announcer's interruption. After a very small pause to acknowledge the 1937 cut-off, the 2014 live performance continued on to the end, as in fact, the 1937 performance also did. Olin Downes, the *New York Times* reporter who attended the Cincinnati concert in 1937 wrote that Dett, who was present, "received a standing ovation" and added, "*The Ordering of Moses* triumphed."

As part of the "Harlem Renaissance 100 Celebration" in 2019, The Harlem Chamber Players launched a fundraising campaign to raise the money to present the work, but the concert had to be postponed a few months before its performance date due to the pandemic. Two years later, The Harlem Chamber Players are proud to finally be able to bring the work to Harlem. The concert will be broadcast by WQXR. We do hope you will enjoy the performance.

These program notes were compiled, adapted and directly quoted from knowledgeable sources online, for educational purposes only.

Credits include the words of tenor Rodrick Dixon in an article for *The Guardian*, notes by Andrew Clements of *The Guardian*, a quote from August 17, 2016 by Ralph Graves of WTJU Radio Virginia, Rob Barnett of *Music Web International*, Christopher Purdy of *Classical 101*, Mona Seghatoleslami of the *Rochester City Newspaper*, and The Rochester Oratorio Society.

You may read more about Dett in *Follow Me: The Life and Music of R. Nathaniel Dett* by Anne Key Simpson (Scarecrow Press, 1993).

THE ORDERING OF MOSES – TEXT

<i>Miriam</i>	<i>Brandie Sutton, Soprano</i>
<i>Voice of Israel</i>	<i>Krysty Swann, Alto</i>
<i>Moses</i>	<i>Chauncey Packer, Tenor</i>
<i>The Word</i>	<i>Kenneth Overton, Baritone</i>
<i>The Children of Israel</i>	<i>Chorus</i>

The text is based on Scripture and Folklore.

The Moses here depicted is not the Moses familiarized to us by the other arts; especially by the work of Michelangelo, whose statue of the patriarch has become symbolic.

At the time of this “ordering” Moses was a shepherd, on a hillside,—undoubtedly a young man,—which explains the part being assigned to a Tenor voice.

—Robert Nathaniel Dett

THE WORD

All Israel’s children sorely sighed,

CHORUS

By reason of their bondage —

THE WORD

And unto God they sorely cried,

CHORUS

By reason of their bondage —

THE WORD

All Israel’s children sighed —

And unto God they cried —

’Neath Egypt’s king they hard were tried —

CHORUS

By reason of their bondage.

THE VOICE OF ISRAEL

O Lord, behold my affliction.

My heart is turned within me;

A dark’ning cloud is Thy anger,

Thy hand is hard against me.

My eyes and heart fail with grieving;

I walk alone in deep shadows.

Oppressed and captive is Judah;

And Zion sigheth in her mourning.

CHORUS

O Lord!

TRIO

God looked on Israel,
And heard her children groaning;
He looked on her children groaning,
And had respect unto her.

CHORUS

And from a burning hush, flaming,
God spake unto Moses saying —
Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's land;
Tell Pharaoh
Let my people go!
Thou shalt lead thy people
To the promised land.
Go down, take thy rod in thy hand
Thou shalt lead thy people
To the promised land.

MOSES

Lord!

Who am I to go unto Pharaoh,
And why should I lead the children of Israel!
How shall they know Thou sendest me?
What name shall I say unto them?
What signs or wonders show?
I am not eloquent;
Have no gift of speech;
Am slow of tongue.

CHORUS

And God spake unto Moses,
Spake unto Moses saying —
THE VOICE OF GOD
Who hath made a man dumb,
Or who hath made his mouth speak?
Is it not I, Jehovah?
God of your fathers?
Now therefore, go,

And I will be thy mouth.

I will instruct thee
What thou shalt say!

Go down, Moses —

CHORUS

Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's land.

Tell Pharaoh

Let My people go!

Thou shalt lead thy people

To the promised land,

I've looked on Israel,

And I have respect unto her.

MEDITATION OF MOSES

THE WORD

And when Moses smote the water,

The children all passed over;

When Moses smote the water,

The sea gave way.

Rejoice, children, and be glad.

The sea gave way,

And when they reached the other shore —

O glory, hallelujah —

They sang a song of triumph o'er

O glory, hallelujah!

MOSES

I will praise Jehovah,

For he hath triumphed gloriously;

The horse and his rider

He has o'er thrown in the midst of the sea!

CHORUS

Hallelujah, hallelujah,

Let us praise Jehovah.

THE WORD

Then did the women of Israel

Gather with timbrels and dances;

And Miriam, gifted with prophecy,

Answered exhorting them, saying —

MIRIAM

Come, let us praise Jehovah,
For His triumph is glorious;
The clouds and fire are his chariots,
The winds and waves obey Him.
Now all the armies of Pharaoh
Are sunk as stones in deep waters.
The deeps stood up as the mountains,
When Thou didst blow Thy breath upon them.

THE WOMEN

Hallelujah, hallelujah!

MOSES

Sing ye to Jehovah,
For He hath triumphed gloriously.

CHORUS

Thy right hand, O Lord,
Is become glorious in power:
Pharaoh's hosts thou hast cast
In the depths of the sea !

MOSES

Sing ye
Praise to Jehovah,

Sing ye.

CHORUS

He is King of kings;
He is Lord of lords.
Sing together, praise Jehovah,
Great God of our fathers.
God, the great I Am That I Am;
Hallelujah,
He is a Man of War.
Mighty is Jehovah,
Mighty in battle;
No god doth wonders like Him.
Praise the Lord.
Sing to Jehovah,
Whose right hand is our salvation.

MOSES

O praise ye,
Praise Jehovah,

Praise His holy name!

MIRIAM

O praise ye,

Praise ye Jehovah,

Praise His holy name!

CHORUS

He is King of kings,

He is Lord of lords.

Sing together, praise Jehovah,

Great God of our fathers.

God, the Great I Am That I Am,

Hallelujah,

He is a Man of War.

Mighty is Jehovah,

Mighty in battle —

No god doth wonders like Him,

Praise the Lord,

Sing to Jehovah,

Whose right hand is our salvation.

O praise the Lord!

MOSES

I will sing unto Jehovah,

For He hath triumphed gloriously.

MIRIAM

The horse and his rider

He hath thrown into the sea!

MOSES

Jehovah is my strength and my song!

MIRIAM

And He hath become my salvation!

MOSES

This is my God, and I will praise Him!

MIRIAM

My fathers' God, and I will exalt Him.

MOSES

Thou, Lord, in Thy loving kindness

Hast led the people, whom Thou hast redeemed!

MIRIAM AND MOSES

Jehovah shall reign forever and ever!

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Damien Sneed, Conductor and Choirmaster

As a multi-genre recording artist and instrumentalist, Damien LeChateau Sneed is a pianist, vocalist, organist, composer, conductor, arranger, producer, and arts educator whose work spans multiple genres. He has worked with jazz, classical, pop, and R&B legends, including the late Aretha Franklin and Jessye Norman, which he is featured on Norman's final recording, *Bound For The Promised Land*, on Albany Records. He also worked with Wynton Marsalis, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, Ashford & Simpson, J'Nai Bridges, Lawrence Brownlee, and many others. In addition, Sneed has served as music director for several Grammy Award-winning gospel artists. Sneed is a 2014 Sphinx Medal of Excellence recipient. And he is a 2020 Dove Award winner and a 2021 NAACP Image Award winner for his work as a featured producer and writer on the Clark Sisters' newest project, "The Return", released on March 13, 2020.

Sneed is currently a faculty member of the Manhattan School of Music and Artist-in-Residence at Michigan State University. During the 2018 – 2019 season, Sneed served as music director, composer in residence, and cover conductor for the staff of the Houston Grand Opera, who commissioned him to compose a new chamber opera, *MARIAN'S SONG*, about the life of Marian Anderson, which had its world premiere on March 5, 2020. Alvin Ailey Dance Theater commissioned Sneed to create an original score for Testament, a contemporary response to the 60th Anniversary of Revelations, for the dance company's first virtual season, which premiered on December 17, 2020. He was commissioned by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis to compose a chamber opera, *The Tongue & The Lash*, with libretto by Karen Chilton imagining a post-debate conversation between James Baldwin and William Buckley which premiered on June 10, 2021.

Sneed is featured in the award-winning PBS documentary *Everyone Has a Place*, which stars Wynton Marsalis. The film captures Sneed's journey as the musical conductor of the historic tour performances of Marsalis' "Abyssinian Mass." The film features the world-renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and Sneed's 70-piece Chorale LeChateau.

Highlights of Sneed's 2020 – 2022 seasons included: an IMG Artists' holiday tour, "Joy To The World: A Christmas Musical Journey" from December 1 – 12, 2021, the Flint Symphony Orchestra's Holiday Pops concert as guest conductor on December 18, 2021, the world premiere of his ASCAP Kingsford Commission composition in January 2021, and an Aretha Franklin Tribute Tour from February 1 – March 20, 2022, featuring Damien Sneed with notable guest artists Valerie Simpson and Karen Clark Sheard.

In 2022, Sneed was recently commissioned to compose his 4th opera by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis to compose a reimagined adaptation of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*, which will premiere on May 20, 2023, to open OTSL's season featuring Brandie Inez Sutton and Justin Michael Austin. In the upcoming 2022 – 2023 season, as well as upcoming tour 'Our Song Our Story', which is an evening of operatic arias, art songs and spirituals featuring Justin Austin, Raehann Bryce-Davis and Brandie Sutton accompanied by a string quartet with Damien Sneed on piano.

Terrance McKnight, Host

When Terrance McKnight moved to New York City, his 96-year-old grandmother offered him a few words of wisdom: "If you've got something to say, get out there in the middle of the road and say it; don't go hiding behind no bush." From a long line of passionate citizens — his maternal family founded a branch of the NAACP in Mississippi and his father the pastor of a church in Cleveland — Terrance and his siblings were expected to contribute to their community while growing up. Early on, Terrance decided he would take the musician's journey.

As a teenager, he played trumpet in the school orchestra and played piano for various congregations around Cleveland. At Morehouse College and Georgia State University he performed with the college Glee Club and New Music Ensemble respectively and subsequently joined the music faculty at Morehouse. While in Georgia he brought his love of music and performing to the field of broadcasting.

Terrance is an Artistic Advisor for the Harlem Chamber Players and serves on the board of the Bagby Foundation and the MacDowell Colony. He's frequently sought out by major cultural organizations for his insight into the cultivation of diverse perspectives and voices in the cultural sphere. He regularly curates concerts and talks at Merkin Concert Hall, the Billie Holiday Theatre the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the Museum of Modern Art.

Janinah Burnett, Soprano

Visionary performance artist Janinah Burnett is one of the foremost artists of her generation. A versatile singing actor, musician, writer, arranger, and educator, Janinah is in demand and has thrilled audiences internationally with signature roles including Mimí in *La Bohème*, Leila in *Les Pêcheurs des Perles*, Donna Anna and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Marguerite in *Faust*, Violetta in *La Traviata* and many, many more. An original cast member of Baz Luhrmann's *La Bohème* on Broadway as Mimí, Janinah received a Los Angeles Theater Alliance Award and appeared on the Tony Awards with this production.

More recently, Janinah was principal artist at the Metropolitan Opera for 8 seasons and debuted as Bianca in *La Rondine*.

Janinah originated the role of Harriet Tubman in the world premier American Opera Projects presentation of Nkeiru Okoye's *Harriet Tubman: When I crossed that Road to Freedom* and thrilled audiences as the Voodoo queen "Lolo" in The Harlem Chamber Players and Harlem Opera Theater revival presentation of H. Lawrence Freeman's opera *Voodoo*.

For the past 4 years, Janinah has been making appearances as "Carlotta Giudicelli" in *Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway. In February 2021, Janinah released her debut album entitled *Love Color of Your Butterfly*. *Love the Color of Your Butterfly* features Janinah's musical arrangements and collaborations with some of the world's finest jazz musicians. Released on her own record label **Clazz Records**, *Love the Color of Your Butterfly* is an amalgamation of Jazz, Opera, Art Song, Oratorio, R and B, and Spirituals and introduces her concept of "**Clazz**." **Clazz** encourages collaboration and redefines the parameters of genre while embracing parts of history that are erased, widely unknown and forgotten. *Love the Color of Your Butterfly* has been featured in numerous publications including *The Financial Times*, *Playbill*, *Broadway World*, *Downbeat Magazine*, *Opera News* and is available anywhere music is sold. See Janinah after the performance for a signed CD!

Brandie Sutton, Soprano

Hailed by *Opera News* for her "sumptuous, mid-weight soprano," and *The New York Times* for her "warm, ample voice," "ravishing performance" and "distinctive earthy coloring," Ms. Brandie Inez Sutton has appeared in concert halls and on opera stages around the world. Most recently she performed as La Fée in Massenet's *Cendrillon* at the Metropolitan Opera, Musetta from Puccini's *La Bohème* with Seattle Opera, and Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto* with New York City Opera. House debuts for Ms. Sutton also include Semperoper Dresden, Palacio de Bellas Artes, Opera Maine, Teatro Petruzzelli, and more. In addition to opera houses, she is no stranger to the concert stage and has been featured with many symphony orchestras including Richmond Symphony Orchestra, South Florida Symphony Orchestra, Royal Danish Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Radio Orpheus Symphony Orchestra in Moscow, and the Krasnoyarsk Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra.

Many don't know, but the versatile vocalist is sought after in many genres, appearing as a guest soloist with Wynton Marsalis' Jazz at Lincoln Center

Orchestra. She has appeared several times at Carnegie Hall with artists from Cyrus Chestnut to the Cecilia Chorus of New York. She excitedly makes several House debuts this season including Detroit Opera, Spoleto Festival USA, Lakes Area Music Festival, Virginia Opera and Opera Philadelphia. This season Ms. Sutton also returns to the Metropolitan Opera.

Ms. Sutton's fervent interest in social justice has also engaged her on many concert stages not usual for an opera singer. More than once has she participated in events for EJI (Equal Justice Initiative) appearing in concert with Andra Day, Bebe Winans and John Legend. She has also been immortalized as a hologram in The Legacy Museum: From Slavery to Mass Incarceration located in Montgomery, AL.

Krysty Swann, Mezzo-Soprano

Krysty Swann is an esteemed member of The Metropolitan Opera and this season returns for their productions of Akhnaten and Elektra. Philadelphia born and Detroit raised, she debuted the role of the Mother in Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's *Blue* for Michigan Opera. Krysty also created and performed the role of Mayme in Lincoln Center's new and critically acclaimed *Intimate Apparel*, the new opera directed by Bartlett Sher and written by Lynn Nottage, with music by Ricky Ian Gordon, which will also air on PBS' Great Performances this Fall. Additionally, she performed Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* for Lubbock Symphony Orchestra and most recently created the role of Joyce "Tilly" Mitchell in the world premiere of Nico Muhly's digital one act opera *The Glitch* which was released by Catapult Opera in February 2021.

Chauncey Packer, Tenor

The American tenor, a native of southern Alabama, sang his first Metropolitan Opera performances during the 2019/20 season, appearing in *Porgy and Bess* as Sportin' Life, Robbins, and the Crabman. He has also recently appeared as tenor soloist in the Mozart *Requiem* with the Colour of Music Festival; sung in concert with the Saint-George International Music Festival and the Harrisburg Symphony; reprised Sportin' Life with New York Harlem's *Porgy and Bess* at the Teatro Regio in Turin, Italy; and appeared at Soo Theatre Project in Michigan (Pinkerton/*Madama Butterfly*) and Chautauqua Opera (Cavaradossi/*Tosca*, Jo the Loiterer/*The Mother of Us All*). His portrayal of Sportin' Life has earned acclaim at La Scala, Paris's Opéra Comique and in Tulsa, Atlanta, Birmingham, San Francisco (released on DVD), on tour in Europe, at New York's Harlem Theatre, and on CD. Packer has also appeared with the major companies of Nashville, Grand Rapids, Des Moines, and New Orleans, among many others.

Kenneth Overton, Baritone

Kenneth Overton is lauded for blending his opulent baritone with magnetic, varied portrayals that seemingly “emanate from deep within body and soul.” Kenneth Overton’s symphonious baritone voice has sent him around the globe, making him one of the most sought-after opera singers of his generation. Kenneth is a 2020 GRAMMY AWARD WINNER for Best Choral Performance in the title role of Richard Danielpour’s *The Passion of Yeshua* with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by JoAnn Falletta.

This season, engagements for Kenneth include his Metropolitan Opera debut in the fall of 2021 as Lawyer Frazier in *Porgy and Bess*, a reprisal of the role of Ralph Abernathy in *I Dream* with Opera Carolina, The Homecoming Soldier in Zach Redler’s *The Falling and The Rising* with Opera Carolina, Germont in *La Traviata* for Fort Worth Opera, and will join Boston Lyric Opera for their production of Terence Blanchard’s *Champion*.

He will also appear with the National Philharmonic as a soloist for Mozart’s *Requiem* as well as Hailstork’s *A Knee on the Neck*, Handel’s *Messiah* with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic, Mozart’s *Requiem* with the National Chorale, a solo recital at The Quick Center for the Arts at St. Bonaventure University, George Crumb’s *American Songbook II* with Chamber Music Northwest, and will debut Damien Geter’s *An African American Requiem* with the Oregon Symphony with subsequent performances at the Kennedy Center with Choral Arts Society of Washington. Next season will see Overton perform in Tobias Picker’s *Emmeline* with the Tulsa Opera and a return to Opera Carolina in the title role of *Porgy and Bess*, a role he has performed over 100 times worldwide.

Leyland Simmons, Choreographer

Leyland Simmons was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska. He studied at Interlochen Arts Academy, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Miami City Ballet, The School of American Ballet, Creative Outlet Dance Theatre of Brooklyn, The Ailey School and Ballet Divertimento in Montreal, Canada. Leyland is a Graduate of the Professional Performing Arts High School in New York City and a former member of Ailey 2 and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Mr. Simmons has also performed with the New York City Ballet, Peridance Ensemble, Forces of Nature Dance Company, Nathan Trice’s/Rituals, George Faison and Ballet X.

Leyland’s choreography has been presented at City Parks Summerstage, Bryant Park, The Apollo Theater, Nike Headquarters, the Kennedy Center’s Millennium Stage in Washington DC, and E-moves 18 at the Harlem Stage Gatehouse. He

has also choreographed an industrial for Pier 59 Studios RED Camera event and for alternative rock band Opium Ink's music video "Porcelain Doll."

Mr. Simmons is also a member of the School of American Ballet's Alumni Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English and a Masters Degree in Dance Education (K-12 concentration) from NYU. In 2017 Leyland began teaching for the NYU Steinhardt Summer Intensive and in 2020 he began teaching as an adjunct instructor at NYU Tisch.

Leyland is a recipient of the 2008 Harlem Stage 'Fund for New Works' Grant, the 2011 NYFA Build Grant, and the 2018 Boissak/Heilbron Charitable Grant. In the fall of 2017, Leyland became the resident choreographer at the Harlem School of the Arts and in 2020 the Chair of Dance.

In 2020-2021 he became the first male visiting faculty Co-Chair for the School of American Ballet. Leyland is honored to be one of the first African American's invited to the American Ballet Theater National Training Curriculum's Board of Examiners.

THE HARLEM CHAMBER PLAYERS

The Harlem Chamber Players is an ethnically diverse collective of professional musicians dedicated to bringing high caliber, affordable, accessible live music to people in the Harlem community and beyond. Founded in 2008, The Harlem Chamber Players annually present a rich season of formal live concerts, indoors, outdoors, and online. We also promote arts inclusion and equal access to the arts, bringing live music to underserved communities and promoting shared community arts and cultural engagement. The group was first inspired by the late Janet Wolfe, a long-time patron of minority musicians and founder of the NYC Housing Authority Symphony Orchestra. The Harlem Chamber Players have presented culturally relevant programs at numerous venues throughout the city and collaborated with many other arts organizations. The Harlem Chamber Players are also Artists-in-residence at the Harlem School for the Arts.

The Harlem Chamber Players have also been mentioned in articles in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, *Musical America*, and on NPR, NBC, and “Here and Now” on ABC and have been featured on national radio at WQXR/WNYC at The Greene Space. The Harlem Chamber Players are the recipient of the 2022 Sam Miller Award for the Performing Arts presented by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

To learn more about The Harlem Chamber Players, please visit our website www.HarlemChamberPlayers.org.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Verdery Roosevelt from the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ), Cheryl Anhava, Lindsey Crane, and every else at UMEZ for believing in this project back when it was just a dream and for being the first major supporter to help make this event come to life.

Thank you to Yuien Chin of Harlem One Stop, who also started the Harlem Cultural Collaborative to bring together over forty cultural institutions and arts organizations throughout Harlem for a multi-year, community-wide celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Chamber Players joined the Harlem Cultural Collaborative in 2019. Tonight's production, postponed from 2020, was meant to be part of this initiative.

Thanks to our Artistic Advisor Terrance McKnight for putting together the Panel Discussion. Thanks also to Alexa Smith for moderating and to our panelists—Rabbi Tavi Koslowe, Damien Sneed, and Terrance McKnight.

Thanks to Events Manager Lauren Pearlstone here at The Riverside Church for all your guidance.

We would like to thank Alexa Smith, Devon Kelly, and Madeline Tolliver for all your help in putting together this production, including providing us with rehearsal spaces at Manhattan School of Music and introducing us to MSM students for tonight's orchestra.

We would also like to thank Leyland Simmons and Yolanda Wyns from the Harlem School of the Arts for our ongoing partnership.

Thank you to Eileen Delahunty, Ed Haber, and George Wellington from WQXR for recording tonight's concert for a later broadcast.

Special thanks also to Stanley Heckman and Sone Takahara for so graciously opening up your home back in 2019 for a fundraiser for tonight's event.

Thank you to tonight's VIP Patrons: Jonathan Becker, Sandra Billingslea, Sydney Butts, Gwendolyn Carroll, Clare Coss, Susan Feder, Lynne Foote, Jo-Ann Graham, Susan Macaluso, Estelle Parsons, Marcia Sells, Susan Tennant, Christopher Thompson, Kathleen Watson, and Ed Yim.

Thank you to all the performers tonight for your hard work and artistry!

Thanks to all of you for coming out tonight. We wish you all a wonderful summer, and we hope to see you over the summer and next season!

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Thank you to all of you who supported our early fundraising campaigns in 2019 for tonight's production The Ordering of Moses.

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We hope you will join our list of supporters and contribute to our 2022 Season. Admission to our concerts covers less than 20% of all costs and much less for a big production like tonight's *The Ordering of Moses*. Your support helps us to bring concerts like these to you right in our own community.

All gifts of \$150 or more will receive as a gift a copy of our debut album, all music by the renowned Black composer Adolphus Hailstork, which is expected to be released this summer. Please make sure to include your postal address and email on the remittance envelope.

You may use the QR code on this page to donate now via a credit card or PayPal. We also now use Venmo, and you can find us as @harlemchamberplayers.



The Harlem Chamber Players 2021-22 Season is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; in part by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; in part by a grant from New York Community Trust; in part by a grant from the Emma A. Scheafer Charitable Trust; in part by a grant from Columbia Community Service; in part by West Harlem Development Corporation via the Tides Foundation; in part by a grant from the Lily Auchincloss Foundation; in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts; in part with funding from the Turrell Fund; in part with funding from the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation; in part by a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; in part by a grant from The M&T Charitable Foundation; in part by a grant from the Howard Gilman Foundation; in part by a grant from the Baisley Powell Elebash Fund; in part by a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies; in part by a grant from the Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund; in part by a grant from the Richenthal Foundation; in part from a grant from New Music USA; and through the generous donations of our supporters and donors.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, June 19, 2022 at 11 AM

Museum of Arts & Design, 2 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10019

GatherNYC@MAD

Gather NYC presents The Harlem Chamber Players' Quartet in a concert featuring music by Joseph Bologne (a.k.a. the Chevalier de Saint-Georges), Florence Price, and Antonín Dvořák in a Juneteenth concert. Tickets are \$25.

Sunday, June 19, 2022 at 4:30 PM

United Methodist Church of Red Bank

247 West Front Street, Red Bank, NJ, 07701

The Red Bank Chamber Music Society and The T. Thomas Fortune Cultural Center Present members of The Harlem Chamber Players in a Chamber Music Celebration of Juneteenth. This concert will feature music by Joseph Bologne (a.k.a. the Chevalier de Saint-Georges), Florence Price, George Walker, Harry T. Burleigh, and Antonín Dvořák. This concert is FREE and open to the public.

Sunday, July 7, 2022 at 4 PM

Caramoor's The Venetian Theater, 149 Girdle Ridge Road, Katonah, NY, 10536

Program: *The Chevalier*—A Concert Theater Work About Joseph Bologne Written and Directed by Bill Barclay. This innovative work of concert theater honors the life of Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges — a prolific 18th-century composer, virtuoso violinist, the finest fencer in Europe, general of Europe's first Black regiment, and a crusader for equality. The story of this extraordinary artist of color, overlooked in history, is bursting to be told!

The Harlem Chamber Players are joined by four actors and violinist Brendon Elliott for this concert theater work exploring Bologne's music, friendships with Mozart and Marie Antoinette, and his unknown contribution to the abolishment of slavery. Tickets start at \$20 for children and \$40 for adults.

Sunday, August 28, 2022 at 2 & 4 PM

Bargemusic, Brooklyn Bridge Blvd., Brooklyn, NY 11201

The Harlem Chamber Players' Quartet—violinist Ashley Horne, violinist/violist Claire Chan, violist William Frampton, and cellist Wayne Smith—joins violinist Mark Peskanov in two concerts. The program is Nkeiru Okoye's *Movements* for String Quartet, Tania León's *Esencia*, and Mozart's *Quintet in G Minor*. Tickets are \$35.

Visit www.HarlemChamberPlayers and sign up for our email list for concert announcements and other news.



THE HARLEM CHAMBER PLAYERS, INC.

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