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THE HARLEM CHAMBER PLAYERS
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SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER

New and ongoing partnerships for the upcoming season include American Composers Orchestra, The Classical Theatre of Harlem, Manhattan School of Music, Harlem Stage, Harlem School of the Arts, Gateways Music Festival, an Emmett Till Opera Production with composer Mary Watkins and librettist Clare Coss, New York Philharmonic, The Dream Unfinished, Red Bank Chamber Music Society, The Woodland, Caramoor Music Festival, The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, Opus 118 Harlem School of Music, Historic Harlem Parks, Talea Ensemble, and IMG performing artist Damien Sneed (photo).

Staff: Liz Player, Executive and Artistic Director; Carl Jackson, Associate Artistic Director and Director of Development; Terrance McKnight, Artistic Advisor; Yolanda Wyns, Director of Education and Community Engagement; Andrew Sotomayor, Executive Assistant; Amy Fraser, Administrative Coordinator.

Visit our website www.HarlemChamberPlayers.org for more information and to sign up for our email list to get concert announcements and other news.



2020 – 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

When we entered our 13th Anniversary Season in the midst of this still ongoing global pandemic, we had no idea how we would make it through the season. Like everyone else, we had no choice but to take one step at a time, adapt to the changes, and understand that our world will never be the same again. However, music and art can still heal and bring us together, and we vowed to respond to the times with much more meaningful music.

Against the odds, this year wound up being the busiest season we have ever had. We did not know when we asked our friend Dr. Adolphus Hailstork to compose a world premiere to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre that this buried history would finally emerge into the mainstream and that Juneteenth would become a national holiday. Our online Juneteenth concert, entitled "Pity These Ashes: TULSA 1921-2021," featured incredible music by all Black composers, including Adolphus Hailstork, Trevor Weston, Jessie Montgomery, and Alice Coltrane and was filmed in the newly renovated Dorothy Maynor Hall at the Harlem School of the Arts. This concert was mentioned and reviewed in numerous outlets, including CNN, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Ebony Magazine*, *New York Amsterdam News*, "Here and Now" on ABC, *OperaWire*, *Musical America*, *Seen and Heard International*, *Dayton Daily News*, *Financial Times*, and on local Tulsa 2 News Oklahoma.

Top photo: Mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges and conductor Amadi Azikiwe standing with orchestra. Photo by Bob Curtis. Middle photo: Student dancers from Harlem School of the Arts in performance. Screen shot taken from video by David McLean. Lower photo: Harpist Ashley Jackson. Photo by Bob Curtis.





2020 – 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

We started the season with a partnership with the Death of Classical series and the historic Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn in a series of concerts, “A Lament for Troubled Times” and “To America,” which was later streamed via The Greene Space at WQXR/WNYC and got well over 15,000 views on YouTube and Facebook. And that is how we became Artists-in-Residence at The Greene Space, who streamed our 13th Annual Black History Month Celebration, a concert in celebration of Adolphus Hailstork’s 80th birthday, and our Juneteenth concert that featured the world premiere of Hailstork’s *TULSA 1921 (Pity These Ashes, Pity This Dust)*.

Other highlights during the season included joining the New York Philharmonic’s Bandwagon 2 Festival in Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem, performing in Morningside Park as part



of the Historic Harlem Park’s inaugural Juneteenth Festival, launching our Harlem Walking Tour video series, joining the Washington Square Music Festival for a live in-person concert, presenting a series of “American Dreams” outdoor string quartet concerts, and producing our very first musical documentary *In Song and Spirit*, which later got picked up by BronxNet TV. Our online presence went from dismal to robust just within this past year as we created and added numerous videos to our YouTube channel. We gave over \$20,000 in Artist Relief Fund grants to musicians, and we completely revamped our website www.HarlemChamberPlayers.org.

Top photo: Left to right are violinists Ashley Horne and Claire Chan, cellist Wayne Smith, and violist Amadi Azikiwe. Photo by Steven Pisano. Middle photo: Left to right are violinist Ashley Horne, violist William Frampton, cellist Wayne Smith, bassist Anthony Morris, French hornist Eric Davis, bassoonist Amy Fraser, and clarinetist Christopher Bush. Photo by Bob Curtis. Lower left photo: Members of The Harlem Chamber Players with soprano Laquita Mitchell performing in Marcus Garvey Park as part of the New York Philharmonic’s Bandwagon 2 Festival. Photo by Erin Baiano.

2021 – 2022 PREVIEW

Members of The Harlem Chamber Players will join The Classical Theatre of Harlem in Bryant Park on September 10 at 7 PM in excerpts from *A Harlem Dream*, based on Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. This event is free and open to the public with seating available on a first-come, first-served basis. We are also producing our debut album, featuring all music by composer Adolphus Hailstork, which we expect to release in 2022.



This 14th Anniversary Season begins with two Season Opening Concerts to allow for social distancing, and they will take place on September 23 and 24 at 7 PM at Broadway Presbyterian Church at 114th Street and Broadway. Make sure to visit our website and sign up for our email list to get updates as protocols for in-door events may change due to uncertainties around Covid variants. These concerts will feature music by Chen Yi, Nkeiru Okoye, Francis Poulenc, and Adolphus Hailstork. On October 9 at 8 PM, members of The Harlem Chamber Players will join Talea Ensemble at Harlem Stage in a performance of Julius Eastman’s *Feminine*. On November 19 and 20 at 7 PM, we will present piano trios by Undine Smith Moore, David Baker, and Maurice Ravel at the Harlem School of the Arts.

This year’s Annual Black History Month Celebration will take place at the Harlem School of the Arts and will feature a world premiere by Nkeiru Okoye, who is our Composer-in-Residence this season. Ms. Okoye was recently named a Guggenheim Fellow, and we are honored to present her works. The long-awaited production of the Nathaniel Dett oratorio *The Ordering of Moses*, which is now more relevant than ever, is scheduled for Friday, June 17, 2022 at 7:30 PM at The Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine. IMG performing artist Damien Sneed is the music director and conductor for this season finale event.

Top Photo: Left to right are violinists Ashley Horne and Claire Chan, baritone Kenneth Overton, cellist Wayne Smith, and violist Amadi Azikiwe during a film shoot at The Greene Space at WQXR/WNYC. Photo by Bob Curtis. Lower left photo: Composer Nkeiru Okoye.