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SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER




The New York Times

Review: 'The Ordering of Moses' Shines at Riverside Church

The Harlem Chamber Players presented R. Nathaniel Dett's 1937 oratorio in honor of the centennial of the Harlem Renaissance, for the Juneteenth weekend.

THE HARLEM CHAMBER PLAYERS
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We return to The Forum at Columbia University on March 20, 2023 with a new "Women of the Movements" free concert. On June 9, 2023 we will present "Harlem Songfest II," a gala concert featuring beloved arias from the traditional European canon as well as beautiful arias and songs by Black composers, past and living. This concert will be led by the Pulitzer Prize winning composer-conductor Tania León. The featured vocal soloists will be soprano Janinah Burnett, soprano Jasmine Muhammad, mezzo-soprano Lucia Bradford, tenor Chauncey Packer, and baritone Kenneth Overton.

Please visit www.HarlemChamberPlayers.org to learn more details about these concerts and to purchase tickets. Sign up for our email list to get concert announcements and other news.



Photo: Tania León

2021 – 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

We reached yet another milestone last season in that we were finally able to present our concert, featuring the monumental oratorio by the Black Canadian-born composer R. Nathaniel Dett, *The Ordering of Moses*, for a packed audience of over 1,100 people at The Riverside Church on June 17, 2022. This concert was delayed for two years due to the pandemic. We presented the concert in association with the Manhattan School of Music and the Harlem School of the Arts in honor of the Harlem Renaissance Centennial and Juneteenth.

This event garnered lots of attention and was covered by ABC Eyewitness News, WNYC News, *The Gothamist*, and OperaWire. It also got excellent reviews from *The New York Times* and *Seen and Heard International*. What was most insightful about the *The New York Times* review entitled "The Ordering of Moses' Shines at Riverside Church" is that it so precisely described what we aim to do in noting that "the event felt like a broad community gathering, as though a sampling of city dwellers stepped off a subway train and headed to the same place. New Yorkers across ages...filled the pews." The underlying theme of the program was one of hope, Black liberation, and a foreshadowing of our own triumphant emergence from the pandemic we are all enduring.

Top photo: Harlem School of the Arts alumni, teen and junior dance ensembles joined in the Dett *The Ordering of Moses*. Photo by Jeena Moon/*New York Times/Redux*. Middle photo: Left to right are vocal soloists Brandie Sutton, Krysty Swann, and Kenneth Overton standing in front of the choir. Photo by Bob Curtis. Bottom photo: Left to right are violinists Ashley Horne and Sandra Billingslea, pianist Kyle Walker, cellist Wayne Smith, violist William Frampton, and harpist Ashley Jackson performing during our February 2022 Black History Month Celebration.





2021 – 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

In July members of The Harlem Chamber Players joined Concert Theatre Works at Caramoor in a performance of *The Chevalier*, a musical play about the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the first known classical composer of African descent. We hope to bring this production to Harlem in 2023.

Other highlights during the last year included The Harlem Chamber Players' Quartet being invited to perform for the readings during the 20th Anniversary 9/11 Commemoration, presenting the world premiere performance of Nkeiru Okoye's *We Met at the Symphony* that we commissioned, and presenting our inaugural "Women of the Movements" concert in partnership with The Forum at Columbia University.

We are also thrilled to have been awarded the 2022 Sam Miller Award for Performing Arts, given by the Lower



Manhattan Cultural Council this past spring. New York Community Trust featured founder Liz Player in its Spring Newsletter in an announcement about The Harlem Chamber Players receiving a grant award toward diversifying audiences for chamber music.

Top photo: Left to right are violinists Ashley Horne and Claire Chan, soprano Leah Hawkins, cellist Wayne Smith, and violist William Frampton performing Nkeiru Okoye's *We Met at the Symphony* at the Brooklyn Public Library. Photo by Gregg Richardson. Middle photo: In the center are solo violinist Brendon Elliott and lead violinist of the orchestra Ashley Horne performing as part of the musical theater production of *The Chevalier* at Caramoor. Photo by Bob Curtis. Bottom photo: The string students at Harlem School of the Arts led by David Burnett at the piano during a Joint Concert with Opus 118 Harlem School of Music and Harlem School of the Arts. Photo by Bob Curtis.

2022 – 2023 PREVIEW

Our new season opens on September 23, 2022 with two concerts featuring masterpieces in chamber music literature, including the Mendelssohn *Octet*, *Spiritual Fantasy No. 12* by Frederick Tillis, and *Quartettssatz* by Franz Schubert. On September 30th and October 1st you



will find The Harlem Chamber Players' Quartet performing at the Met Museum on Fifth Avenue right near the Petrie Court Café in the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court.

On October 8 we pay tribute to Latine/Hispanic Heritage Month with guest artists Sweet Plantain Quartet, internationally acclaimed saxophonist James Carter, and two-time Grammy-nominated violinist Curtist Stewart in music by Latine composers, including Gabriela Lena Frank, Eddie Venegas, and Roberto Sierra. The composer Roberto Sierra will be in attendance. On November 18, our Annual Bach Concert, which has been on pause for two years, returns with a concert of concerti, featuring violinists Ashley Horne and Claire Chan with orchestra comprising members of The Harlem Chamber Players.

On February 13, 2023 members of The Harlem Chamber Players, along with the Talea Ensemble, will be presented by the New York Philharmonic in their new Artist Spotlight Series in the Sidewalk Studio in David Geffen Hall for a performance of Julius Eastman's *Femenine*. We return on February 16, 2023 to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture for our 15th Annual Black History Month Celebration with guest artist pianist-composer Aruán Ortiz in the world premiere of *Episodes of an Unforeseen Departure* for chamber ensemble, solo works for piano, and other chamber works by Black composers.

Top Photo: Sweet Plantain Quartet members left to right are violinist Eddie Venegas, cellist Leo Grinhauz, violist Orlando Wells, and violinist Joe Denizon. Bottom photo: Saxophonist James Carter.