

THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
VASSAR COLLEGE

Holding Fast to Dreams
Faculty & Guest Recital

Ashley Jackson, *harp*

Thomas Sauer, *piano*

Marsha Thompson, *soprano*

Ian Tyson, *clarinet*

Kyle Walker, *piano*

A Dickinson-Kayden Event

Saturday, February 12, 2022 · 8 PM

Skinner Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Little David

arr. Margaret Bonds
(1913-1972)

Marsha Thompson, Kyle Walker



Prema

Alice Coltrane/arr. Ashley Jackson
(1937-2007) (b. 1986)

Shelter in Place

Brandee Younger

Unrest

(b. 1983)

Ashley Jackson



Troubled Water

Bonds

Deep River

Samuel Coleridge Taylor/arr. Jackson
(1875-1912)

Kyle Walker, Ashley Jackson



Sonatine for Clarinet and Piano
Feely; Fast
Moderately slow
Rather lively (Scherzando)
Freely; Moderato

Zenobia Powell Perry
(1908-2004)

Ian Tyson, Thomas Sauer



from Three Fours, Op. 73: Number Two
The Bamboula
Go Down, Moses

Coleridge Taylor

Calvin Taylor
(b. 1948)

from Piano Sonata No. 1
II. *Theme and Variations*

George Walker
(1922-2018)

Kyle Walker



Hold Fast to Dreams
Song to the Dark Virgin
Weeping Angel
Here's One
He's Got the Whole World

Florence Price
(1887-1953)
William Grant Still
(1895-1978)
arr. Bonds

Marsha Thompson, Kyle Walker



PROGRAM NOTES

Tonight's program highlights several squares of the richly variegated quilt that is music of the African diaspora. The spiritual takes pride of place tonight, heard in arrangements for voice and harp (*Little David, He's Got the Whole World*); voice and piano (*Here's One*); harp alone (*Deep River*); piano alone (*Go Down, Moses*); and as source material for concert music (*Troubled Water*, movement two of George Walker's First Piano Sonata). The all-embracing spirit of 1960's jazz appears in Ashley Jackson's version of Alice Coltrane's *Prema*. European musical traditions shape the final squares of tonight's quilt: the genres of art song, sonata and salon music respectively inform works by Florence Price and William Grant Still (*Weeping Angel*); Zenobia Powell Perry (Sonatine for Clarinet and Piano); and the Englishman Samuel Coleridge Taylor (*Three Fours, The Bamboula*).

A thumbnail biographical sketch of each composer follows.

Margaret Bonds—Born in Chicago; studied in high school with Florence Price, later at Northwestern University and the Juilliard School; in 1933, first Black piano soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; friendship with poet Langston Hughes beginning 1936; moved to New York City in 1939, where she worked as an editor, and as a church- and theater musician.

Alice Coltrane—Born Alice McLeod in Detroit; younger sister wrote songs for Motown Records; studied both classical and jazz piano in Paris, including with Bud Powell; second husband was John Coltrane; after his death, a spiritual crisis moved her to study Hinduism; later directed an ashram near Malibu, CA.

Brandee Younger—American harpist working in jazz, classical, hip hop and R & B; 2022 Grammy nominee for "Beautiful is Black;" leader of Brandee Younger Quartet; has worked with Ravi Coltrane, Marcus Strickland, John Legend, Lauryn Hill, Christian McBride, Gil Scott-Heron, Lakecia Benjamin, and Kanye West; faculty at NYU, The New School.

Samuel Coleridge Taylor—Born in London; studied at the Royal College; works widely performed in England and America in the first decades of

the 20th century, especially the cantata *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*; received by President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House on one of his three trips to the United States; widow granted a lifetime pension by King George V of England.

Zenobia Powell Perry—Born in Boley, OK; studied piano with R. Nathaniel Dett, composition with William Dawson at the Tuskegee Institute; began composing in earnest in her forties; taught at the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, later at Central State University in Wilberforce, OH.

Calvin Taylor—Born in Los Angeles; studied at Oberlin Conservatory, University of Michigan, UCLA, Dick Grove School of Music; composer, arranger, organist and pianist whose works have been performed by the Shreveport, LA, Utah, and Nashville Symphonies, among many others; extensive concert tours in the United States and abroad.

George Walker—Born in Washington, D.C.; studied piano at Oberlin Conservatory, and with Rudolf Serkin at the Curtis Institute, where he began to compose; earned a doctorate in composition from the Eastman School; first African-American winner of the Pulitzer Prize in composition (*Lilacs*, voice and orchestra); worked predominantly in a modernist idiom.

William Grant Still—Born in Woodville, MS; studied at Central State University (Wilberforce, OH) and at Oberlin Conservatory; first American composer to have a premiere at New York City Opera (*Troubled Island*); first African-American to conduct a major American orchestra (LA Philharmonic); first American composer to have an opera performed on television (*A Bayou Legend*); also worked with W.C. Handy, Sophie Tucker, Artie Shaw, and Paul Whiteman.

Florence Price—Born Florence Smith in Little Rock, AR; studied at New England Conservatory, passing as a Mexican to avoid racial discrimination; moved to Chicago for further studies and first public successes, including a performance of her Symphony No. 1 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; in 2009, a chance discovery in a dilapidated house in St. Anne, IL uncovered many of Price's unpublished manuscripts.

—Thomas Sauer



BIOGRAPHIES

Praised for her “eloquent” performances (*Musical America*), **Dr. Ashley Jackson** is a highly sought after collaborator in New York and beyond. As a harpist she performs with the New York Philharmonic, on Broadway, and works regularly with the Harlem Chamber Players. Throughout her academic and professional careers, Dr. Jackson has demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion within higher education and the performing arts. Her speaking engagements have included “Affinities: Margaret Bonds and Langston Hughes” (Studio Museum of Harlem) and “Representation as Resistance: How an Activist Orchestra Redresses the Push-out of Black Practitioners from Classical Music” (Harvard University). Dr. Jackson recently premiered her first film, *In Song and Spirit*, and is currently working on her debut solo album titled, *Ennanga*, an exploration of African American spirituals and other forms of black musical expression. Dr. Jackson is an Assistant Professor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Music Department at Hunter College.

Marsha Thompson began her musical studies as a violinist. She has sung the roles of Tosca, Aida, Abigaille, Sieglinde, Violetta, and several other leading ladies. *The New York Times* describes her voice in the role of Violetta as “a warm agile soprano with a secure technique.” “Abigaille is a difficult role to cast, a big sing with a wide dramatic and vocal range; soprano Marsha Thompson was up to all the challenges the score threw at her. Her high pianissimo singing was exquisite.” (*St. Louis Dispatch*) Ms. Thompson has performed with Teatro Municipal de São Paulo, Union Avenue Opera, New York City Opera, New York Grand Opera, and Opera Carolina as well as having won numerous prizes in national competitions with the Metropolitan Opera National Council, Gerda Lissner Foundation, Orlando Opera Competition, Ft. Worth Opera Competition, and many others. www.MarshaThompson.com Instagram: @MarshaCarolSings.

A strong advocate for social equality, critically-acclaimed pianist **Kyle P. Walker** believes music can speak to social issues better than verbal language can, the understanding of which he brings to both traditional Western repertoire and that of the living world-wide composers with whom he collaborates. His performances have been featured on media broadcasts including The Green Space at WNYC, WQXR's *McGraw-Hill Financial Young Artists Showcase*, NPR's *Public Radio East*, NPR's 1A, and UNC-TV. He has been featured in solo recital at New York's Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in performances at The Apollo Theater, The Kennedy Center, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Frist Museum of Art, The Tantalooona Cave of Australia, and the Lied Center of Kansas.

As an advocate of social justice, Walker is a founding member of The Dream Unfinished, an activist orchestra which supports NYC-based civil rights and community organizations through concerts and presentations. As an arts activist and educator, he has presented residencies and masterclasses at various institutions such as The University of Dayton, The University of Virginia, The Harlem School of the Arts, The Duke Ellington School of the Arts, and the Music Educators workshop of Carnegie Hall. Walker is on faculty at the Lucy Moses School at the Kaufman Music Center, Fort Lee School of Music, and The Artist Program at Suzuki on the Island. Mr. Walker received his Masters of Music from Mannes College, The New School for Music. He holds degrees in piano performance from East Carolina University's A.J. Fletcher School of Music, and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. He has studied with Thomas Sauer, Benjamin Hochman, Keiko Sekino, Henry Doskey, and Clifton Matthews. See and hear more of Kyle's musicianship on Instagram @klassickkyle and at www.kylewalkerpiano.com.

Dr. Ian Tyson is a founding member of Trio 212. He has performed with orchestras, chamber groups, and given solo recitals in such prestigious venues as The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center. A dedicated pedagogue, Dr. Tyson is on faculty at Vassar College, Bard College Conservatory of Music Preparatory Division, Special Music

School, and also maintains a substantial private clarinet studio. He has performed and given master classes throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Africa. As a teaching artist with *Daraja Music Initiative*, Dr. Tyson works in Tanzania teaching students to play the clarinet and helping to conserve the African Blackwood tree.

Dr. Tyson received a DMA from Stony Brook University, MM from Michigan State University, and BM from Miami University (OH).

Dr. Tyson is a Rice Clarinet Works Performing Artist. For more information, please visit: www.IanTysonClari.net

American pianist **Thomas Sauer** performs regularly as soloist, chamber musician, and recital partner. Some of Mr. Sauer's recent solo appearances include concertos with the Quad-City and Tallahassee Symphonies and the Greenwich Village Orchestra, and recitals at Mannes College, Merkin Concert Hall, Rockefeller University, and St. John's College, Oxford. With his long-time duo partner, cellist Colin Carr, Mr. Sauer has appeared at the Wigmore Hall (London), Holywell Music Room (Oxford), the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Musikgebouw, Bargemusic (New York City), and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Boston), among many other venues. Other duo recitals include violinists Midori (Berlin Philharmonie and the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels) and Jennifer Koh (Kennedy Center). Among Mr. Sauer's numerous chamber music appearances are performances at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society; performances with members of the Juilliard String Quartet at the Library of Congress; and many concerts with the Brentano String Quartet. Mr. Sauer has performed at many of the leading festivals in the United States and abroad, including Marlboro, Caramoor, Music@Menlo, Chamber Music Northwest, El Paso Pro Musica, and the Chamber Music Festivals of Seattle, Taos, Four Seasons (North Carolina), Portland, and Salt Bay (Maine); as well as Lake District Summer Music (England) and Festival des Consonances (France). Mr. Sauer was the founder and director of the Mannes Beethoven Institute, a highly-regarded week-long summer training program in New York that ran for fifteen seasons.



TEXTS

Hold Fast to Dreams

Langston Hughes (1901-1967)

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Songs to the Dark Virgin

(Langston Hughes)

I.
Would
That I were a jewel,
A shattered jewel,
That all my shining brilliants
Might fall at thy feet,
Thou dark one.

II.
Would
That I were a garment,
A shimmering, silken garment,
That all my folds
Might wrap about thy body,
Absorb thy body,
Hold and hide thy body,
Thou dark one.

III.

Would
That I were a flame,
But one sharp, leaping flame
To annihilate thy body,
Thou dark one.

Grief

LeRoy V. Brant
(b. 1930)

Weeping angel with pinions trailing
And head bowed low in your hands.
Mourning angel with heart-strings wailing,
For one who in death's hall stands.

Mourning angel silence your wailing,
And raise your head from your hands.
Weeping angel on your pinions trailing
The white dove, promise, stands!





Photography and videography are not permitted in Martel Recital Hall without prior approval by the Concerts Administrator.

Please silence all cell phones or other personal electronic devices and refrain from texting. Use of these instruments will disturb other audience members and cause interference with in-house recording and webcasting.

Skinner Recital Hall is equipped with a LOOP Hearing System. The loop will offer improved clarity for persons with hearing loss who wear telecoil —or T-coil—equipped hearing aids.

If you would like to receive the Music Department's e-newsletter, *This Weekend in Skinner*, please contact the Concerts Administrator at concerts@vassar.edu.



Spring 2022 Skinner Concert Series

Currently in-person and open to the public.

Masks must be worn at ALL times regardless of vaccination status.

Proof of Vaccination & photo ID are required for entry.



Sunday, February 20 · 3:00 PM (live & webcast*)

Vassar College & Community Wind Ensemble

James Osborn, *conductor*

Saturday, February 26 · 8:00 PM (live & webcast*)

Vassar College Orchestra

Eduardo Navega, *conductor*

Sunday, February 27 · 3pm (live & webcast*)

Faculty & Guest Concert: Music for Five Trombones

Works by Mahler, Wagner, Bruckner, Creston, and Tommy Peterson.

Featuring Brad Ward, Tom Hutchinson, and Paul Bellino, *tenor trombone*,
and Nick Schwartz and Jack Schatz, *bass trombone*.

Saturday, March 26 · 1:30 PM

Senior Recital: Alice (Yiqing) Fan, *piano*

A solo piano recital featuring music by Beethoven, Brahms,
Liszt, Wang, and Gershwin.

Saturday, March 26 · 3:30 PM

Senior Recital: Amanda Montgomery and Noa Rosenberg, *voice*

Assisted by Susan Brown, *piano*.

Sunday, March 27 · 3:00 PM (live & webcast*)

Faculty & Guest Special Event:

Honoring Professor Brian Mann - Retirement Concert

An Afternoon of Jazz featuring Brian Mann, *piano*,
Pat O'Leary, *double bass*, Craig Wuepper, *drums*, with special guest
appearances by faculty and friends.

* Where noted view online at: vassar.edu/music/concerts/webcast

Series continues through May - visit vassar.edu/music/concerts for full
schedule and current Covid protocols