

EASTERN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
RICH HERITAGE OLD & NEW

STUDENT
LIMITED
RUSH
TICKET
FREE
DAY OF SHOW

**RICH
HERITAGE
OLD AND
NEW**

**THE EASTERN SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

DAVID COMMANDAY, DIRECTOR

PRESENTS A CONCERT IN CELEBRATION OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH -
FEATURING THE WORKS OF:

WILLIAM GRANT STILL - AFRO AMERICAN SYMPHONY
VALERIE COLEMAN - UMOJA
FLORENCE PRICE - SUITE OF DANCES

PLUS: ARIAS BY GIUSEPPE VERDI AND BEDRICH SMETANA,
SUNG BY JEMMA ALLEN AND HONOR BAKER,
2023 WINNERS OF THE CONCERTO/ARIA COMPETITION

23
feb
2024

Dvorak
Concert Hall
7:30pm

\$15/\$10/\$5



PROGRAM

Suite of Dances.....Florence Price
(1887 – 1953)

- I. Allegretto
- II. Allegretto
- III. Allegro molto

Conducted by Cameron Craig, Graduate Conducting Assistant

Caro Nome che il mio cor.....Giuseppe Verdi
(1813 – 1901)

From *Rigoletto*

Jemma Allen, Soprano solo

Ten Lasky Sen.....Bedřich Smetana
(1824 – 1884)

From *The Bartered Bride*

Honor Baker, Mezzo-soprano solo

Umoja.....Valerie Coleman
(b. 1970)

–Intermission–

Afro American Symphony.....William Grant Still
(1895 – 1978)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| I. Moderato assai | "Longing" |
| II. Adagio | "Sorrow" |
| III. Animato | "Humor" |
| IV. Lento, con risoluzione | "Aspiration" |



ESO PERSONNEL

Violin I

Dr. Ji-Myung Kim
Kaylin Richey
Eva Miller
Basia Latawiec
Karen Swenson
Laurel Swenson-Hultz

Violin II

Eun Namkung
Chronicle Nagel
Kaitly Parker
Trixie Brantley
Emily Bales
Terry Coulton
Judy Barford

Viola

Hanna Rietz
Dominika Targosz
Ruth Riegel
Elaine Fine
Tanya Reed

Cello

Barbara Hedlund
Mikayla Todd
Bill Schultz
Jennifer Murphy Smith
Robert Hauser
Jeri Hughes

Bass

Andrey Gonçalves
Evan Irvin

Flutes

Isaac Navarro
Meysam Ghodraty
Alene Maxstadt (Picc)

Oboe

Aaron Wilbert
Ethan Schobernd
Oboe 2/English Horn

Clarinet

Leila Hanley
Emily Dooley
Addie Willis
Reynol Oyervides

Bassoon

Jay Dawson
Prof. Annie K. Mason

French Horn

Daniel Mack
Jay Larson
Lea Humphreys

Trumpet

Conner Sanders
Emily Thorpe
Matt Chesner

Trombone

Daniel Torres
Sam Sennet
Garrett Wright

Tuba

Caden VanSwol

Percussion

Alex Drews
Gary C. Reed
Cheyenne Brickner

Piano/Keyboard

Bart Rettberg

Vocal Soloists

Jemma Allen
Honor Baker

FOR TICKETS TO FUTURE EVENTS

Call the Doudna Fine Arts Center Box Office at 217-581-3110! The Box Office is open Tuesday - Friday 11:00am - 5:00pm and one hour prior to every ticketed event. You can also visit www.doudnatix.com and purchase/print your tickets at home and skip the line all together!

PROGRAM NOTES

Suite of Dances Florence Price (1887-1953)

Florence Price is remembered as the first black American woman to garner success as a symphonic composer. After marriage she and her husband left the racially troubled Arkansas for Chicago in 1927 and attended the American Conservatory of Music to further her studies in composition.

Originally written for piano titled "Three Little Negro Dances" in 1933, the dances were orchestrated in 1950. The three dances, "Rabbit Foot," "Hoe Cake," and "Ticklin' Toes," are characteristic of the Southern Black folk tunes of her youth.

Caro Nome, che il mio cor... Giuseppe Verdi (1813 - 1901)

This famous aria from Verdi's opera, *Rigoletto*, is sung by Gilda, daughter of Rigoletto, court jester to the Duke of Mantua. The beautiful young girl has been shielded from the evils of the court by her father – above all from the eyes of the Duke, a womanizer without scruple. Despite her father's efforts, Gilda has encountered the Duke and fallen into 'first love.' Her infatuation is the core of the opera's tragedy, and in this aria we hear all the pure, idealized love the innocent feels toward the heartless scoundrel. Sung in Italian.

Ten Lasky Sen Bedřich Smetana (1824 - 1884)

Mařenka is the titular character of Smetana's comic opera, *The Bartered Bride* – a work that established the composer as the founder of Czech national music. The plot is centered around her parents' plans to marry her to an unknown in an arranged marriage – though she is in love with Jenik. In the third act she believes (incorrectly) that she has been betrayed by Jenik's selling the rights to her marriage to another man, and she expresses her grief and disillusionment. Turns out he was selling the rights to himself but had not warmed Mařenka. No worries - happy ending! Sung in Czech.

PROGRAM NOTES

UMOJA: Anthem of Unity **Valerie Coleman (born 1970)**

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Valerie Coleman is an African American composer and GRAMMY-nominated flutist, named Performance Today's 2020 "Classical Woman of the Year" and highlighted in the "Top 35 Women Composers" by *The Washington Post*. In its original form, Umoja, the Swahili word for Unity and the first principle of the African Diaspora holiday Kwanzaa, was composed as a simple song for women's choir. It embodied a sense of 'tribal unity, through the feel of a drum circle, the sharing of history through traditional "call and response" form and the repetition of a simple melody.

"Listen my people,
Children of ALL
It's time for Unity
Hear the Winds Call.
Oh a-hum, a-hum Nkosi ah...
Oh a-hum, a-hum Nkosi ah..."

It was rearranged into a woodwind quintet during the genesis of Coleman's chamber music ensemble, Imani Winds, with the intent of providing an anthem that celebrated the diverse heritages of the ensemble itself.

Almost two decades later from the original, the orchestral version brings an expansion and sophistication to the short and sweet melody, beginning with sustained ethereal passages that float and shift from a bowed vibraphone, supporting the introduction of the melody by solo violin. Here the melody is sweetly singing in its simplest form with an earnest reminiscent of Appalachian style music. From there, the melody dances and weaves throughout the instrument families, interrupted by dissonant viewpoints led by the brass and percussion sections, which represent the clash of injustices, racism and hate that threatens to gain a foothold in the world today. Spiky textures turn into an aggressive exchange between upper woodwinds and percussion, before a return to the melody as a gentle reminder of kindness and humanity. Through the brass led ensemble, the journey ends with a bold call of unity that harkens back to the original anthem.

"This version honors the simple melody that ever was but is now a full exploration into the meaning of freedom and unity. Now more than ever, Umoja has to ring as a strong and beautiful anthem for the world we live in today." (Valerie Coleman)

PROGRAM NOTES

Afro-American Symphony (Symphony No. 1 in A flat) William Grant Still (1895-1978)

William Grant Still was an African American composer of nearly two hundred works, including ballets, symphonies, chamber ensembles, and choral works. His first symphony, "Afro-American Symphony," was originally composed in 1930, and revised in 1969.

The work is in traditional symphonic form, incorporating blues progressions and rhythms characteristic of African American music of the time. Themes and organization are rhapsodic in character, resulting in a highly emotional work. Still composed it in just three months, during a time when he had no work, based on sketches made previously in 1924. Still commented: "I seek in the 'Afro-American Symphony' to portray ... the sons of the soil, who still retain so many of the traits peculiar to their African forebears..."

The symphony was inspired by a series of poems written by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) whose parents were former slaves during the American Civil War. (In his notebook Still gave subtitles to the movements, indicated here in parentheses.)

I. Moderato assai ("Longing")
"All my life long twell de night has pas'
Let de wo'k come ez it will,
So dat I fin' you, my honey, at last',
Somewhah des ovah de hill."

II. Adagio ("Sorrow")
"It's moughty tiahsome layin' 'roun'
Dis sorrer-laden earfly groun',
An' oftentimes I thinks, thinks I
'Twould be a sweet t'ing des to die
An' go 'long home."

III. Animato ("Humor")
"An' we'll shout ouah halleluyahs,
On dat might reck'nin' da."

PROGRAM NOTES

IV. Lento, con risoluzione ("Aspiration")

"Be proud, my Race, in mind and soul.

Thy name is writ on Glory's scroll

In characters of fire.

High mid the clouds of Fame's bright sky

Thy banner's blazoned folds now fly,

And truth shall lift them higher."

Upon the completion of his first symphony Still commented, "He who develops his God-given gifts with view to aiding humanity, manifests truth."

Program notes by Cameron Craig

JEMMA ALLEN

Jemma is a senior vocal performance and vocal music education double major. Jemma has been a musician for most of their life. They started piano lessons at the age of two and instantly fell in love with music. Jemma was born and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina but has called Illinois home for seven years now. They plan on pursuing a master's degree in vocal performance upon graduation at Eastern Illinois University.

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Mary Lou Hubbard
Don Dawson
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Dvorak Level

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Hannah Wellbaum - GA
Piper Rhoads
Estela Guzman
Zak Wagner
Honor Baker
Christian Hopper
Connor Mellott
Karrin Estes
Andrew Powell
Maelee Greenwood
Taylor Ratliff
Caden VanSwol

Doudna Front of House

June Giffin
Laura Severson
Makayla McPhedran
Abbey Vollmer
Caylee Conway
Emily Ritter
Jay Dawson
Gage Matthews
Ethan Schobernd
Corbin Cox
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Peyton Hayes
Molly Neff