

CONCERT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Photo by Laurie Rhodes

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THE PROGRAM

Cantata, BWV 106, *Actus tragicus* (1707)
Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit
(God's time is the very best time)
Sinfonia

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
arr. Richard Valitutto

Healer (2021)

Milad Yousufi (b. 1995)

String Trio (2004)

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004)

At the Purchaser's Option with variations (2016)

Rhiannon Giddens (b. 1977)
arr. Jacob Garchik

Piano Trio (1916-1917/1978)
III. Moderato
IV. Très aminé

Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983)

Lyric for Strings (1946)

George Walker (1922-2018)

Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34a (1893)
Allegro non troppo
Andante, un poco Adagio
Scherzo
Finale

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

PROGRAM NOTES

Actus Tragicus was first performed at CBST as a piano four-hands work by Adrienne Kim and Joyce Rosenzweig, in an arrangement by György Kurtág, the renowned contemporary Hungarian composer. It is presented this evening in an arrangement for string quartet. **Bach** wrote this cantata at the age of 22, and it is likely that it was written upon the death of his uncle. The cantata's text is from both the Old and New Testaments, with the theme of our mortality as well as God's presence throughout history. The Sinfonia is a work of great simplicity and has a wondrous ability to express what cannot be put in words.

Milad Yousufi is a pianist, composer, conductor, poet, singer, painter and calligrapher. Yousufi's work is deeply inspired by his country and culture. Yousufi has a dream to make a difference in the future of music and culture in Afghanistan.

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson composed his ***String Trio*** from his deathbed. You may notice as this piece begins, a similarity to the famous Air by Johann Sebastian Bach, a plucked bass line moving in a steady rhythm, over which the viola and violin sing a poignant chromatic, yet very lyrical melodic line. Perkinson had a hugely varied career, working in jazz, theater, dance, film, television, and in classical music, with a wide array of colleagues such as Max Roach, Harry Belafonte, Alvin Ailey, Marvin Gaye and Jerome Robbins. In his own compositions, he skillfully combines the counterpoint of Bach with African-American folk music and spirituals, jazz, blues and intricate dance rhythms, creating a compositional style uniquely his own.

In its original version, ***At the Purchaser's Option*** is a song composed by **Rhiannon Giddens**, and used as the opening track for her album, *Freedom Highway*. In this album, Giddens examines various aspects of the African-American experience. The song's title comes from a 19th-century advertisement she found for a 22-year-old female slave whose baby was also available for sale ("at the purchaser's option"). Through her lyrics, Giddens more than glimpses into the mind of the slave, a slave who will not allow her soul to be destroyed by her captors. Giddens has written:

"That's an aspect of slavery that is the subtext for other things, and a song can apply to people in slavery today. I sang the song at a gala for an organization that helps to free women who have been trafficked. Modern slavery is huge, and there are still women who have not control over their bodies and children."

*I've got a babe but shall I keep him
'Twill come the day when I'll be weepin'
But how can I love him any less
This little babe upon my breast*

*You can take my body
You can take my bones
You can take my blood
But not my soul*

*I've got a body dark and strong
I was young but not for long
You took me to bed a little girl
Left me in a woman's world*

*You can take my body
You can take my bones
You can take my blood
But not my soul*

*Day by day I work the line
Every minute overtime
Fingers nimble, fingers quick
My fingers bleed to make you rich*

*You can take my body
You can take my bones
You can take my blood
But not my soul*

Germaine Tailleferre was the only female composer in the group composers known as *Les Six* (Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honneger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc and Tailleferre). She also worked closely with Maurice Ravel and Sergei Diaghilev. Despite a very large number of compositions spanning more than 70 years, she remains overshadowed by her male contemporaries. Tailleferre initially composed her ***Piano Trio*** in 1916-1917, and after 60 years, returned to this work to add new movements, giving this work new life and an expanded, important voice.

George Walker's accomplishments place him not only as a trailblazer for African-American composers, but as a musician who deserves all of the recognition and accolades as one of America's most important and accomplished musical artists. In 1936, at the age of 14, he was admitted to the Oberlin Conservatory. He went on to the Curtis Institute of Music, studying piano, composition and chamber music. When he received his Doctorate from the Eastman School of Music, Walker was the first person of color to do so. His list of achievements is truly stunning, by any measure. He was the first African-American composer to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize (1966). Sadly, it took the Pulitzer Award Committees 53 years to grant this prize to a musician of color, having instituted this category in 1943. Walker's ***Lyric for Strings*** was composed while he was a student at Curtis. In its original form, it was the slow movement, titled *Lament*, of Walker's first string quartet. He later arranged this movement for string orchestra. This movement eventually became a work to be played on its own, with Walker's new title, *Lyric for Strings*. Walker's grandmother, to whom he was very close, had died one year before he originally composed this work, and it is dedicated to her. In interview, he called this piece "his grandmother's piece", saying, "She'd had two husbands. She lost the first one when he was sold at auction. The second

had died. She herself had escaped slavery. She never talked about it. Except one time, when I could not help myself and asked, “What was it like? What was the experience of slavery like?” She spoke one sentence, only, “They did everything except eat us”. Lyric for Strings is rich with beautiful melodies, contrasted with harmonic and rhythmic intensity, ultimately ending as it begins, in a setting of sublime repose.

The *Piano Quintet* of **Johannes Brahms** is a story of transformation. The piece was originally conceived as a string quintet with two cellos, then becoming a work for two pianos. At Clara Schumann’s urging, Brahms once again reconsidered the instrumentation for this work, and following the advice of his friend Hermann Levi (German Jewish orchestra conductor who devoted himself to the works of Brahms and Richard Wagner), transformed the work in to a piano quintet. When he received the score from Brahms, Levi wrote:

“The Quintet is beautiful beyond words. Anyone who did not know it in its earlier forms of string quintet and two-piano sonata would never believe that it was not originally thought out and designed for the present combination of instruments... You have turned a monotonous work for two pianos into a thing of great beauty, a masterpiece of chamber music...”

THE ARTISTS

SEBU SIRINIAN, born in Bucharest, Romania, is the first violin of the award winning Meridian String Quartet. He has performed internationally and held residencies at Queens College, Bard College, Turtle Bay Music School through a grant by Chamber Music America, and the Yale at Norfolk Summer Festival. Mr. Sirinian is a member of Amici New York, Brooklyn Philharmonic, has performed regularly with American Symphony Orchestra, and many Broadway orchestras including Phantom of the Opera, Christmas Carol, West Side Story, and The Radio City Christmas Spectacular, and has performed chamber music with Paul Neubauer, Seymour Lipkin, Daniel Phillips and William Sharp, and as a soloist with The New York Chamber Orchestras, Bach Aria Festival Orchestra and Hunter College Orchestra. He performed as concertmaster for Musica Viva, Princeton Chamber Orchestra, the Connecticut Grand Opera, and is Principal Second of Stamford Symphony. Mr. Sirinian, a graduate of Juilliard School, has studied with Jerry Beal, Ivan Galamian, Joyce Robbins and the Juilliard String Quartet, and is currently on the faculty of the NY Youth Symphony Chamber Music Program. He has been heard on WQXR and WNYC, and is recorded on LRC, Liquid Silver, Capstone and Midder Music Records. Sebu is looking forward to playing in the orchestra for the upcoming Broadway revival of Sunset Boulevard.

LISA TIPTON, violinist and co-founder of the award-winning Meridian String Quartet, has toured internationally and held residencies at Queens College, Bard College, and the Turtle Bay Music

School. She has won distinctions from the Evian International Competition, Artists International, and Chamber Music America. As a devoted interpreter of new music, Ms. Tipton established the Made in America series at Weill Recital Hall. and performed on the Interpretations series at Merkin Concert Hall. She performs regularly with Amici NY, Stamford Symphony, Little Orchestra Society and the American Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Tipton's recording of Charles Ives' Violin Sonatas was released in 2006 on Capstone Records. She has performed as a soloist with the Cornell, Barbad, NY Chamber Orchestras, The Bronx Symphony and Vari Musici. Lisa has toured with the Manhattan Piano Trio. Lisa is part of a team that recently launched The NY Chamber Music Co-OP, a new creative performance collaborative in NYC. She has been heard on WQXR, WNYC and recorded on LRC, Midder, Arizona and Capstone Records. Lisa is Director of the New York Youth Symphony Chamber Music Program, and on the faculty of School for Strings. She earned a B.A. from Cornell University, an M.A. from the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College, and has studied with Daniel Phillips, Gerald Beal, Joyce Robbins, Ani Kavafian, Roman Totenberg and The Juilliard Quartet. Lisa is currently a D.M.A. candidate at CUNY Graduate Center.

ADRIA BENJAMIN grew up in Brooklyn and began viola studies through a program offered by the New York City public schools. She is currently a member of the American Symphony Orchestra, New York Pops, Amici New York, Voices of Ascension Orchestra and The New York Chamber Music Co-OP. Adria performs annually the Bard Festival and was Artistic Director and Artistic Administrator of the OK Mozart International Festival. Adria has been heard on National Public Radio as a recitalist, and has participated in numerous orchestra and chamber music recordings, commercial and film score recordings. She was invited to perform as a viola soloist at the 92nd Street Y, and at Zankel Hall with the critically acclaimed Voices of Ascension under the direction of Dennis Keene. Adria serves on the faculty of Mannes College (The New School), where she teaches viola and chamber music in the Preparatory Division, serves as Director of Orchestras for the Preparatory Division, and as conductor of the Mannes Community Orchestra. She chairs the String Department of the Preparatory Division, and is Co-Chair of the New School University Faculty Senate. Adria has also led many collaborations between student and professional musicians in Side-by-Side concerts, instrumental master classes and performance workshops. She also serves as conductor for the Stamford Symphony's (CT) education and student concerts. Adria has been part of the planning and creative teams, and a performing artist, for many concerts benefiting a wide range of non-profit organizations. Her teachers include Mary Jane Metcalfe, Francis Tursi, Karen Tuttle and Joey Corpus. While pursuing a Master's degree at the Peabody Conservatory, she was the teaching assistant for Karen Tuttle, and was awarded the Peabody Prize for Outstanding Viola Performance. Her conducting studies were with Gustav Meier and Robert DeCormier.

KATE DILLINGHAM is a cellist, [recording artist](#), and proponent of the music of living composers who enjoys a multifaceted career on varied frontiers of the musical world. She has performed concerti of Dvorak and Haydn in musical capitals from Salzburg to Moscow and has appeared in concert at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and The MET Museum. Ms. Dillingham has driven innovation in the composition and performance space, commissioning contemporary works and collaborating with many artists in original multimedia events. She has produced and recorded audio/video projects, is a voting member of the Recording Academy (GRAMMY's) and serves as President of the Violoncello Society of New York ([VCS](#)). Kate is Artistic Director of [ArtsAhimsa](#): Music for Peace, a global network of artists working together to promote non-violence through affirmative power of the Arts. A skilled teacher and inventor, she founded [MyBlueSkiesMusic.com](#) an online meeting platform for musicians to connect, teach, and live-stream in high quality audio/video. Kate is both architect and facilitator of ideas and is passionate about her craft and [engagement](#) in the full spectrum of music from composition to performance.

Pianist **ADRIENNE KIM**'s recent performances include recitals in New York's Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Bargemusic, Boston's Symphony Hall, Washington D.C.'s Phillips Gallery and Ravinia's Rising Stars series in Chicago. She has appeared as soloist with the Central Philharmonic Orchestra of Beijing, the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Mexico, the Portland Chamber Orchestra, and the Richmond Orchestra. Ms. Kim was a member of Chamber Music Society Two, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's residency program from 1998-2000. Ms. Kim has also performed with the New York Chamber Ensemble, the Skaneateles Festival, Lighthouse Chamber Players, Salt Bay Chamberfest, Carnegie Chamber Players, Bronx Arts Ensemble, and the Seal Bay Festival. With the West End Chamber Ensemble, ensemble-in-residence at the North Carolina School of the Arts, she participated in the National Endowment for the Arts/Chamber Music America Rural Residency. She has recorded the solo and chamber works of Daniel S. Godfrey with the St Paul Chamber Orchestra on the Koch label, the violin and piano sonatas of Charles Ives with Lisa Tipton on Capstone Records and the sonatas of Niels Gade with violinist, Katie Wolfe on the Centaur label. She and Ms. Tipton also present the Made in America series at Weill Hall in Carnegie Hall. She is also a founding member of the NY Chamber Music Co-op. She teaches at Mannes College of Music, in the Prep, Extension and College divisions, and she serves as head of the Piano Department in the Prep division and as Coordinator of Secondary Piano in the College division. She has also been on the faculties of Kean University and Syracuse University. During the summers she is on the faculty of the Kinhaven Music School in Vermont and the Summertrios festival in Bryn Mawr. Ms. Kim studied with Menahem Pressler at Indiana University where she earned her Bachelor's degree and earned her Master's degree from Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with Leon Fleisher.

