

# EOS



educate ● open ● strengthen

Sunday, November 8, 2020  
4:00 pm,  
Brattleboro Music Center

## **The Program**

### **Chevalier de Saint-Georges, Joseph Bologne**

#### ***String Quartet in C minor, Op. 1, No. 4***

Allegro Moderato

Rondeau

Kathy Andrew (violin), Heather Sommerlad (violin),  
Emily Packard (viola), Zon Eastes (cello)

### **Florence Price**

#### ***5 Folksongs in Counterpoint***

- I. Calvary
- II. Oh My Darlin' Clementine
- III. Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes
- IV. Shortnin' Bread
- V. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Moby Pearson (violin), Heather Sommerlad (violin),  
Kathy Andrew (viola), Zon Eastes (cello)

### **George Walker**

#### ***Molto Adagio (Lyric for Strings), String Quartet No. 1***

Heather Sommerlad (violin), Moby Pearson  
(violin), Kathy Andrew (viola), Zon Eastes (cello)

### **DBR (Daniel Bernard Roumain)**

#### ***String Quartet No. 5, "Parks"***

I Made Up My Mind Not to Move

Klap Ur Handz

Isorhythmiclationalistic

Kathy Andrew (violin), Heather Sommerlad (violin),  
Emily Packard (viola), Zon Eastes (cello)

### **Jessie Montgomery**

#### ***Strum***

Kathy Andrew (violin), Heather Sommerlad (violin),  
Emily Packard (viola), Zon Eastes (cello)

## The Composers:



**Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-George** (1745-1799). Born in Guadaloupe to a planter and his mistress slave, Joseph was taken to Paris at age 7 to get the best education possible in high French society. He earned the title Chevalier having been made an officer in the court of Louis XV in 1766. Music was only part of his extraordinary life. He was a boxer, a runner, good ice skater, and one of the best fencers in Europe. His involvement in the French revolution and the abolition movement is well documented. He even created an all-black regiment which saw heavy fighting at the battle of Lille. As a revolutionary who had ties to the king's court, Chevalier was thrown in jail in 1793 and awaited the guillotine, only to be rescued by a sympathetic commissioner.

As a musician and composer, Joseph rose through the ranks quickly; first, as a violinist in the top Paris orchestra (Concert des Amateurs), then as its soloist and leader. During the 1770s he wrote 14 violin concertos, 8 concertantes, and 12 string quartets. The six quartets from Opus 1 are all two movement works published in 1773. The string quartet as a genre was still young and fresh. Haydn's early quartets were known in Paris then and Chevalier was undoubtedly influenced by them.

In 1778 Chevalier and Mozart spent two months under the same roof after Mozart's mother died and he needed a place in Paris to stay. A year later in 1779 Mozart wrote his *Sinfonie Concertante* for violin, viola and orchestra. There is no doubt that Chevalier's *Concertante in G* (1778) inspired him. Mozart, in fact, directly lifted a passage from the end of its first movement.

Chevalier's other musical accomplishments included the commission and premieres of Haydn's 6 Paris Symphonies in 1786, for which he conducted the Concert de la Loge Olympique. He was also offered the directorship of the Paris Opera in 1776. When three of the divas in the company petitioned against the hiring because of his race he withdrew from the running to avoid any awkwardness with his good friend Queen Marie Antoinette.

He was very popular in the public eye and spent the last few years of his life building a new orchestra. "Toward the end of my life, I was particularly devoted to my violin...never did I play it so well!" When he died in 1799, slavery had been abolished for 5 years. Yet when Napoleon re-imposed slavery in 1802 Chevalier de Saint-George's name became expunged from the history books. His music would not be resurrected for almost two centuries.



**Florence Price** (1887-1953) In 2009 a couple renovating a ramshackle house in St. Anne, Illinois uncovered 30 boxes of personal documents. It turned out that this home was the summer residence of Florence Price. In those boxes were

manuscripts of two violin concertos and her 4<sup>th</sup> and last symphony. The discovery of her abandoned materials illuminates the tremendous resistance faced by women of color in the 20th century. These pieces had never been played. In fact, only one conductor in her lifetime presented her work on a major stage.

Born into a middle class family in Little Rock, Arkansas, Florence showed promise at an early age. No one outside her family was willing to teach her because of their prejudice. At age 4, she gave her first piano performance and at 11, her first composition was published. After graduating with honors from the New England Conservatory, she embarked on a teaching career in Little

Rock and then went on to Clark University (Atlanta) as head of the music department. In 1912, she returned home where she remained for a dozen years before racial tensions and lynchings finally forced her family to move to Chicago. This major metropolis became her permanent home and her work began to flourish.

Price won first prize in the Wanamaker Foundation Awards in 1932 for her first symphony. This work was performed by the Chicago Symphony under the direction of Frederick Stock in June of 1933. It was the first time a major symphony orchestra played a composition by a woman of color.

Her music reflects the traditions of western music, her southern roots, and her religious background. The **5 Folksongs** on today's program were published in 1951, although Price may have begun to write them as early as 1927. The original title was **Negro Folksongs in Counterpoint**. When two non-spiritual songs were added (Clementine and Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes) the word 'Negro' was erased from the title page, although it is still legible.

The theme of each song is given equal treatment among the four players. The counterpoint (intertwining of two or more melodies) surrounding the themes becomes characterized by a wide variety of musical genres including hymns, jazz, ragtime, and even French impressionism (Drink to Me). In the finale the counterpoint becomes so busy and rhapsodic that the tune is completely obscured!

In addition to her four symphonies Price's repertoire is filled with chamber music, organ anthems, piano pieces, art songs and spiritual arrangements. There is still much of her work to be explored even 60 years after her death.



**George Walker (1922-2018)** Unlike many other 20th century composers, George Walker does not have a signature element that defines his compositions. "I try not to duplicate what I have already done," he said. His work draws from many influences including jazz, romantic, spiritual or 12 tone/serial. Any one of these genres could be the idiom of a particular piece.

The ***Lyric for Strings*** (1946), also titled ***Lament***, was dedicated to his grandmother who had recently died. Originally scored as the middle movement of his 1st string quartet, Walker also arranged the work for string orchestra. This is very like his friend Samuel Barber borrowing the movement from his own quartet in 1936 to create the beloved ***Adagio for Strings***. The ***Lyric for Strings*** is lush with late romantic harmonies and ultimately became Walker's most popular work.

George Walker was a phenomenal pianist. Enrolling at Oberlin at age 14, he graduated four years later and went directly to the Curtis Institute where he studied with Rudolph Serkin. As winner of the Philadelphia Youth Auditions he played the Rachmaninoff 3rd Concerto with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. In 1950 he became the first black instrumentalist to be signed by major management.

At Curtis, Walker studied composition as a way of channeling the energy he had left over from practicing 5 hours a day. In 1996 he won the Pulitzer Prize for ***'Lilacs'*** for soprano and orchestra. In the words of the committee: "The unanimous choice of the Music Jury, this passionate, and very American, musical composition ... has a beautiful and evocative lyrical quality using words of Walt Whitman." ***Lilacs*** was premiered by the Boston Symphony.

The idiom is decidedly modernistic and indeed contrasts dramatically with *Lyric for Strings* written 50 years earlier. His last major work was *Sinfonia #5, 'Visions,'* and was inspired by the horrific Charleston SC killings in 2015.



**DBR** (Daniel Bernard Roumain) Born in 1970, DBR is a Black, Haitian-American composer, performer, violinist, educator, and activist. His prolific output of genre-bending work combines funk, rock, hip-hop, and classical music, with a focus on social injustice and racial and cultural

identity. He has worked with a wide range of artists, including Phillip Glass, Bill T. Jones, and Lady Gaga, and has made appearances on NPR and American Idol. DBR is committed to both innovation and to his role as an artist to help heal communities through music.

*“Parks”*, DBR’s *String Quartet No. 5*, is dedicated to both Rosa Parks and to strong women everywhere. He writes, “I created Rosa Parks Quartet as a musical portrait of Rosa Parks’ struggle, survival, and legacy. The music is a direct reflection of a dignified resistance. It’s telling that this work may, in fact, be performed on stages that didn’t allow the presence of so many, so often. I often refer to the stage as the last bastion of democracy, where all voices can and should be heard, where we are all equal, important, and necessary.”

The intensity of the relentless ostinato in the first movement, “I made up my mind not to move” conveys Parks’ tenacity and resolve. The second movement, “Klap Ur Handz” invites audience members to clap along with the musicians, in the style of a church revival. And the dissonant, unresolved repetitive rhythmic cells of the third movement, “Isorhythmiclationalistic,” convey both beauty and pain.



**Jessie Montgomery** is an acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator. Born and raised on the Lower East Side in the 1980's, she grew up attending rallies, parties and performances with her parents, learning early on how to blend her artistic side with advocacy. As a violinist, she performs regularly with the Catalyst Quartet and the PUBLIQuartet, spanning genres from traditional classical music to improvisation and the avant garde. As a composer, she's the recipient of the Leonard Bernstein award, and is considered to be one of the most important emerging composers today. As an educator and activist, she's the composer in residence for the Sphinx Organization, a non-profit dedicated to the development of young Black and Latinx classical musicians.

Montgomery writes, "***Strum*** is the culmination of several versions of a string quintet I wrote in 2006. It was originally composed for the Providence String Quartet and guests of Community MusicWorks Players, then arranged for string quartet in 2008 with several small revisions. In 2012, the piece underwent its final revisions with a rewrite of both the introduction and the ending for the Catalyst Quartet in a performance celebrating the 15th Annual Sphinx Competition. Originally conceived for a quintet of two violins, viola, and two cellos, layers of rhythmic or harmonic ostinatos [repeating figures] form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out. The strumming pizzicato serves as a 'texture motive' and the primary driving rhythmic underpinning of the piece. Drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, *Strum* has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration."

## **The Players:**

**Kathy Andrew (violin, viola)** is a resident of Brattleboro, Vermont, and has been a BMC Music School faculty member since 1993. Kathy is Assistant Concertmaster of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Concertmaster of the Opera North Orchestra (NH), Co-Concertmaster of the Juno Orchestra, a member of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra (MA), and a frequent performer in the wide variety of classical music genres and performances in the New England area. In addition to decades performing with the New England Bach Festival Orchestra, she also frequently performed with the Burlington Chamber Orchestra, Green Mountain and Middlebury Opera companies, Berkshire, Albany and New Hampshire Symphonies, taught at Bennington and Keene State Colleges, and continues to perform chamber music with colleagues near and far. While teaching violin, viola and chamber music at the Brattleboro Music Center, she also has a private studio in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

**Emily Packard (viola)** recently moved back to her native New England after 16 years in California's Bay Area. She was a longtime member of the Santa Cruz and Monterey symphonies and freelanced throughout California, playing violin with crossover artists Joanna Newsom, Fred Frith, various dance companies and the folk-rock band Jack O' The Clock. She is passionate about playing chamber and new music, multi-media collaborations and teaching music.

**Moby Pearson (violin)** grew up in the Boston area where he studied with Lucy Parker and George Zazofsky. He received his degree from Oberlin Conservatory as a student of Robert Soetens and Steven Staryk. His chamber music career has included extensive periods as principal violinist with the Apple Hill Chamber Players and the Atlanta Chamber Players. He has performed with many Boston area orchestras and ensembles including Cantata Singers, Emmanuel Music, Boston Musica Viva, Boston Lyric Opera,

and the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra. In addition, Moby has performed with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in Carnegie Hall and major concert halls throughout Europe. He is currently the Director of the BMC Music School String Orchestra and has been teaching violin and viola on the BMC Faculty since 2009.

**Heather Sommerlad** (violin) was born and raised in El Paso, TX, where she played with the El Paso Symphony before continuing her studies at Bennington College. While there, she worked closely with emerging composers, performing countless numbers of new works. As first violinist of the Bennington College String Quartet, she traveled to perform and teach in Kingston, Jamaica, and the Czech Republic. After several years of teaching both group and private violin classes in New York City, she returned to southern VT in 2012 and joined the faculty at the BMC where she teaches violin and coordinates the Music in the Schools program.

**Zon Eastes** (cello) is music director of the Juno Orchestra Project. He has been affiliated with the BMC since 1982 and curates the BMC Chamber Music Series. He teaches cello at the BMC and has previously taught cello and coached chamber music at Amherst, Dartmouth, and Keene State colleges. A passionate arts advocate, he was a staffer for six years at the Vermont Arts Council where he engaged creatives around the state in the establishment of the Vermont Creative Network.

## **The EOS Project**

The EOS Project is a direct response to questions about social justice as it pertains to the world of classical music, and institutions such as the BMC. This ongoing concert series is envisioned as a collaborative effort of BMC Music School faculty and other local musicians to actively seek out and intentionally perform music by composers who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, as well as composers who identify as anything other than cis male.

As our country reckons with its history of oppression, we, as individuals, are working to understand our own implicit biases. In the music world, this bias can be seen in our concert halls, both on stage, and in the music that we program. Composers of color, as well as composers who aren't cis male, have historically been excluded from our musical canon. We're still going to play our Bach, our Haydn, and our Mozart. But we will also play our Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, our Florence Price, our George Walker. This list goes on, from composers who have intentionally been excluded historically, to living, emerging composers today.

EOS is not about inclusivity. Rather, EOS is about education. By learning, performing, and listening to music from outside the parameters of systemic oppression, we are educating ourselves. We are opening ourselves to the reality of whose music exists, and whose voices should be heard. By exploring beyond what we consider "familiar," we strengthen ourselves and our community.



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