



KAUFMAN
MERKIN CONCERT HALL
11/12

Handwritten musical notation on a sheet of paper, partially obscured by the maraca.

REMO
PERCUSSION

“Letting It Shine — The African American Spiritual”

by Catherine Clinton

The rich musical tradition of the African American experience continues to infuse listeners with lessons of hope, lessons of sacrifice, endurance, and struggle. It should be no surprise that music was employed as a clandestine form of communication, conveying at times coded conversation, as a means of subverting enslavement on American shores. Just as persons of African descent resisted their masters, many adapted to a Kongo-Christianity that incorporated traditional rhythms and sounds to the hymns they were taught, making these songs their own, carrying messages of hope and freedom forward. The American spiritual was reborn—with its powerful legacy for us today.

These songs did more than inspire African Americans in bondage, as they gave testimony to lifting every voice against the mighty scourge of slavery. Spirituals created a melodic challenge to racism's blunt force trauma—when millions were ripped from their homes and sold on the auction block. Haunting songs reminded survivors and descendants of the Middle Passage—be it across the Atlantic from a homeland when too many died in watery graves while others landed in a new world. Next this musical tradition became synonymous with the black experience when nearly a million were transhipped across the Continent as slavery fueled a westward stampede. Spirituals reminded those denied even the freedom of worship that they needed to maintain faith to, in Harriet Tubman's mantra, “Keep going.”

Flights to freedom were often fueled by a desire to escape both the lash of slavery and the yoke of racism, which kept African Americans

enthralled before emancipation. In the nation's earliest days, the self-liberators of the Underground Railroad set up networks by the hundreds, with elaborate schemes to spirit bodies and souls away by the thousands. Robbing slaveholders of their chattel and signaling that the spirit of resistance could not be suppressed forever in a land where so many sought dignity and liberty, where so many were willing to fight and die for emancipationist ideals. The messages embedded within these spirituals symbolized a renewed struggle for freedom. And these songs of celebration rang out, calling people to journey to freedom, to seek a better home—on earth or in heaven, but confident that the light would shine.

As these songs ring out during this month commemorating black history—reinterpreted powerfully by Frowner, Boone, Foy and Sutton—we are enriched by the stories of those lost as well as found. We can honor those struggles which brought us to this era, when we can openly celebrate the messages of hope and freedom these songs still embody, to let our lights shine.

Catherine Clinton holds a chair in U.S. history at Queen's University Belfast where she teaches African American and women's history. She has published more than twenty scholarly volumes, including *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (selected as one of the best books of 2004 by both *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The Chicago Tribune*). She writes as well for younger readers, including the picture book, *Phillis's Big Test*, which tells the story of Phillis Wheatley. For more information: www.catherineclinton.com.



The producers and artists extend their sincere thanks to each and every person who contributed to tonight's performance, including the following: KOJO, Jackie Jefferies, Fordam United Methodist Church, Pamela E. Jones, Russell Saint John, Prof. Catherine Clinton, Mark Monteverdi, Carla Grande, Paul Elefante, Macus Gardley, John Tedeschi of John Tedeschi Voice, Frederick Shaka (for translations), Dr. John C. Banks, Doris Sanford, Dr. Henriette Edmonds, Al Rodriguez, Rev. Ian B. Straker, Marcos Sola, Gregory Hopkins of Convent Avenue Baptist Church, Leni Wolfenson, Dolores Cotten, John Fiorito, Tory Bailey and Julian Christenberry of Theater Development Fund, Ricky Ian Gordon, and our several friends at Kaufman Center, Merkin Concert Hall.

Merkin Concert Hall

Sunday, February 5, 2012 at 3:30 pm

B. Arts Presenter
celebrates

The African American Spiritual

A Black History Month Tribute Concert

Darius Frowner, Sherry Boone, Harriett D. Foy and Brandie Sutton

Greeting

Rev. Leo W. Curry, Pastor,
Fordham United Methodist Church (Bronx, NY)

Part I:

The Middle Passage and Slavery

(Text by Marcus Gardley)

HARRIETT D. FOY

TRADITIONAL

An African Children's Song

HARRIETT D. FOY, SHERRY BOONE and BRANDIE SUTTON

Arr. UNDINE SMITH MOORE

Watch and Pray

BRANDIE SUTTON

Arr. MOSES HOGAN

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child

BRANDIE SUTTON

TRADITIONAL

Lord, How Come Me Here?

HARRIETT D. FOY

RICKY IAN GORDON

Song for a Dark Girl

(Text by Langston Hughes)

SHERRY BOONE

SEAN PALMER

You'd Never Believe from the opera ELLEN CRAFT

(Text by Sherry Boone)

SHERRY BOONE

(The composer, Mr. Palmer, will be acknowledged in the audience following the performance of this song.)

Steinway is the official piano of Merkin Concert Hall

The photographing or sound recording of any performance or the possession of any device for such photographing or sound recording inside the theater, without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law.

TRADITIONAL

TRADITIOAL

Arr. CISSY HOUSTON

TRADITIONAL

TRADITIONAL

Arr. MOSES HOGAN

TRADITIONAL

Arr. HALL JOHNSON

Arr. ROBERTO L. BURTON

Arr. HENRY T. BURLEIGH

Arr. HENRY T. BURLEIGH

Part II:

Escape and the Underground Railroad

(Text by Marcus Gardley)

HARRIETT D. FOY

And I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray

HARRIETT D. FOY

Go Down Moses

HARRIETT D. FOY

Steal Away

HARRIETT D. FOY, SHERRY BOONE and BRANDIE SUTTON

No More Auction Block for Me

HARRIETT D. FOY, SHERRY BOONE and BRANDIE SUTTON

Slavery Chain

SHERRY BOONE

He Never Said a Mumblin' Word

BRANDIE SUTTON

Over My Head (I Hear Music in the Air)

BRANDIE SUTTON

Witness

HARRIETT D. FOY, SHERRY BOONE and BRANDIE SUTTON

Intermission

Part III:

Freedom in the North

(Text by Marcus Gardley)

HARRIETT D. FOY

Poor Wayfarin' Stranger

BRANDIE SUTTON

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

BRANDIE SUTTON

Gospel Train

SHERRY BOONE

RICKY IAN GORDON

Stars

(Text by Langston Hughes)

SHERRY BOONE

TRADITIONAL

Change My Name

HARRIETT D. FOY

TRADITIONAL

O Freedom

SHERRY BOONE, HARRIETT D. FOY and BRANDIE SUTTON

Part IV:

Heaven and Transcendence

(Text by Marcus Gardley)

HARRIETT D. FOY

Arr. UZEE BROWN, JR.

Ain't a That Good News

BRANDIE SUTTON

Arr. HALL JOHNSON

Ride On King Jesus

SHERRY BOONE

Arr. ROBERT NATHANIEL DETT

Ride On Jesus

BRANDIE SUTTON

Arr. FERNANDO ORETEGA

Give Me Jesus

HARRIETT D. FOY

Arr. THOMAS KERR/SHELTON BECTON

Oh What a Beautiful City

SHERRY BOONE and BRANDIE SUTTON



About the Text

Marcus Gardley (Poet/Playwright)

Tonight's spoken text was created by Mr. Gardley. In 2011 he won the PEN Laura Pels award for Mid-Career Playwrights. His most recent play, *Every Tongue Confess*, premiered at the Arena Stage theater in Washington, D.C., starring Phylicia Rashad and directed by Kenny Leon. Mr. Gardley

holds an MFA in Playwriting from the Yale Drama School and is a member of New Dramatists, The Drama Guild and the Lark Play Development Center. He is the 2011/2012 Aetna New Voices Playwright in residence at Hartford Stage and a professor of Playwriting at Brown University.

About the Artists

Sherry Boone (Actress/Soprano)

Guest Soloist: Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, The National Symphony Orchestra at The Kennedy Center and The Philadelphia Orchestra with Maestro Robert Kapilow, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony. TV/Film: *30 Rock*, *Gossip Girl*, *Pursuit Glee*. Broadway: *Lost in the Stars* (Irina), *Jelly's Last Jam* (Maman) Gregory Hines, director George C. Wolfe; *Marie Christine* (Marie Christine), director Graciela Daniele; *Master Class* (Sharon) Dixie Carter, Kathy Bates, Jessica Lange, Edie Falco, Leslie Uggams, all as Maria Callas, director Leonard Foglia. London: Royal Festival Hall production *Carmen Jones* (Cindy Lou), director Jude Kelly. National Tours/Off Broadway: *Carousel* (Carrie Pipperidge), director Nicholas Hytner; *My Fair Lady* (Eliza Doolittle), director Richard Hamburger; *Intimate Apparel* (Mayme), director Rajendra Maharaj, *Master Class* (Sharon) Rita Moreno, director Moises Kaufman; *Into the Woods* (Jack), director Charles Abbot. Current: *ELLEN CRAFT* (Ellen Craft) Lyricist Sherry Boone, Composer Sean Jeremy Palmer. www.ellencraft.org and www.sherryboone.com.

Harriett D. Foy (Actress/Singer)

Broadway: *The American Plan*, *Mamma Mia*. Off-Broadway: *On the Levee* (AUDELCO Nomination), *Crowns* (AUDELCO Award), *Lone Star Love* (OBCR), *Inside Out* (OBCR) and *Dinah Was*. Regional: *The Women of Brewster Place* (Arena Stage-Helen Hayes Nomination), *Polk County* (Arena Stage-Helen Hayes Nomination), *After the War* (ACT), *Dance of the Holy Ghosts* (Yale Rep), *Seven Guitars* (Center Stage), *Ambassador Satch* (Dubai) and *Reunion* (Ford's Theater-Helen Hayes Nomination). Film: *In the Family*. Television: *Unforgettable*, *Rescue Me*, *Law and Order*. Howard University. "WGATAP!" www.harriettdfoy.com.

Darius Frowner (Musical Director/Pianist)

Mr. Frowner is very glad to be part of this important piece of work honoring the art of the Spiritual. Darius frequently serves as musical supervisor for national tours of shows, and also as artist in residence at regional theaters. Some shows he

has worked on include Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies*, *Smokey Joe's Café* and *A Chorus Line*. Darius teaches at the Mayo Center for the Performing Arts in Morristown NJ. Here in New York City, Darius has a Bistro Award for his many years of playing piano at the Duplex in Greenwich Village, where he is a mainstay on Monday and Thursday nights. Some notables that Darius has worked with include Joan Rivers, Cissy Houston, Kenny Roberson and Mario Cantone. Darius played for Norm Lewis (currently Porgy in *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* on Broadway) when they gave a two-man concert at The Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. in 2011. Thanks to Patrick Bradford for envisioning this production, and to the three major vocal talents, Sherry, Harriett and Brandie for making this such a great collaboration! www.dariusfrowner.com.

Sean Jeremy Palmer (Composer)

Mr. Palmer wrote the music for the opera *ELLEN CRAFT* which includes tonight's Spiritual song "You'd Never Believe." His work *Boxes* (Cois-Ceim Dance Theater, Dublin), received 5 stars in *The Irish Times*, and was cited as a top cultural highlight of the year. His opera *ELLEN CRAFT* (created with Sherry Boone), based on a true slave escape narrative (NYC Premiere 2004), received the Excellence Award for Outstanding Ensemble. The opera was featured at the AMNH and Manhattan's Cell Theater. His opera *Great White*, based on the true accounts of shark attacks along the Jersey shore, was developed and performed with Pittsburgh's Bricolage Theater Company, and NYC's Atlantic Theater's Studio Four. solarjetpro.com.

Brandie Sutton (Lyric Soprano)

Ms. Sutton is known for her warm, lyrical voice. She received her B. A. in Music from Oakwood University and a Master in Music from Catholic University. She has performed throughout the United States, Bermuda, St. Maarten, Poland, and Italy. In 2010, she made her debut at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. in a solo recital, and made a second appearance there with the National Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Sutton was presented by B. Arts Presenter in her Manhattan recital

debut at Kaufman Center's Merkin Hall in 2011. Ms. Sutton's opera performances include the roles of Lelia in Steven Allen's *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadows*, Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, and Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème*. Ms. Sutton was a second place winner in the prestigious Young Concert Artists, Inc. International Auditions, chosen from nearly 300 vocalists and instrumentalists from all over the world. She was also a winner of The Metropolitan Opera National Council District Auditions, and thereafter took 3rd place in the national competition, The American Prize. She credits her gift, opportunities, and all accomplishments to the one who is mostly responsible for them - God.

About Tonight's Supporters

B. Arts Presenter (Producer)

Founded and managed by New York practicing attorney Patrick A. Bradford, B. Arts is dedicated to fostering the careers of talented visual and performing artists. Tonight's concert is the fifth B. Arts production at Merkin Hall. Upcoming engagements include A Women's History Month Tribute: Willsonia Boyer in Recital, Sunday, March 25, 2012, 6:30 pm and Marilyn Moore in Recital, Saturday, August 25, 2012, 8:30 pm. More information about B. Arts is located at www.BArtsPresenter.com. Mr. Bradford conceived tonight's production and his conception was actualized by the dedicated work of tonight's artists.

Kevin Bagby (Co-Producer)

Mr. Bagby is a classically trained tenor. He has performed extensively in operatic, concert and liturgical music in the New York area and Europe.

Rev. Leo W. Curry (Pastor)

Rev. Curry is the senior pastor of Fordham United Methodist Church, Bronx, New York. In June of this year, Rev. Curry will celebrate his 25th anniversary as pastor of Fordham UMC. He is a graduate of Howard University where he earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in Romance Languages. Prior to joining the ministry, he taught

French, Spanish and ESOL in various public schools on the East Coast for over a decade. Rev. Curry is a graduate of the New York Theological Seminary. He is known for the intelligence and forcefulness of his preaching and some of his sermons are featured on the Fordham UMC website, www.FordhamUMC.org. Rev. Curry is one of ten preachers featured in a forthcoming book by Rev. Dr. Gennifer B. Brooks titled *Black United Methodists Preach!* (Abingdon Press 2012).

Michelle Y. Hodges (Co-Producer)

Ms. Hodges has over 30 years of experience as a fundraising, development and media professional. She has worked in staff and consulting positions with human service, arts, and community development institutions including the Classical Theater of Harlem, Harlem School of the Arts and the Abyssinian Development Corporation. She also ran the commercial division of WNYC-TV for nearly a decade, generating millions of dollars in annual income for the station. She was also the Coordinator of Public Programming at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; a producer on WABC-TV's Emmy-award winning program *Like It Is*, and for many years served in several volunteer capacities with Operation Crossroads Africa, coordinating and evaluating rural development projects in Africa and the Caribbean.

Randall A. Isaac (Co-Producer)

Mr. Isaac is the founder and principal of Festa LLC: Events by Chelsey, a New York City based event planning firm. He also works in the finance industry.

Marcia Pendelton (Press and Media Relations)

Ms. Pendelton is the founder and principal of the media firm Wall Tall Girl Productions, www.walktallgirlproductions.com. She has represented many of Broadway's most significant productions including *Godspell*, *Fela!*, *Fences* and the upcoming revival of *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Blair Underwood. Off-Broadway representations include *The Good Negro* (The Public Theater), *Through the Night* (Union Square Theater), *The Whipping Man* (Manhattan Theater Club) and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Second Stage).

Ecstatic Music Festival

Collaborations that re-define music
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SAT 2.4.12 7:30 PM

**Jherek Bischoff & the Wordless Music
Orchestra with David Byrne, Craig Wedren,
Greg Saunier, Mirah & Zac Pennington**

TUE 2.7.12 7:30 PM

**Sxip Shirey and Angélica Negrón with
Todd Reynolds, Noveller, Jonny Rodgers
& Face the Music**

WED 2.8.12 7:30 PM

**New Sounds® Live with WNYC's John Schaefer
Richard Reed Parry (Arcade Fire), Son Lux
& yMusic**

THU 2.9.12 7:30 PM

**This Will Destroy You, Christopher Tignor/
Slow Six & A Far Cry**

THU 2.23.12 2 PM

**New Sounds® Live with WNYC's John Schaefer
Nick Zammuto (The Books) & Jason
Treuting (So Percussion) with janus,
Daisy Press & Grey McMurray**

SAT 2.25.12 7:30 PM

Glasser & Roomful of Teeth

THU 3.1.12 7:30 PM

**Mariam Wallentin (Wildbirds &
Peacedrums) & Mikael Karlsson
with ACME**

SAT 3.17.12 7:30 PM

Oneida & Rhys Chatham

TUE 3.20.12 7:30 PM

**New Sounds® Live with WNYC's John Schaefer
Dan Deacon, NOW Ensemble
& the Calder Quartet**

SAT 3.24.12 7:30 PM

**The Mountain Goats & Anonymous 4
with Owen Pallett**

WED 3.28.12 7:30 PM

**Music from China & Music from
Copland House with Derek Bemel,
Samson Young, Gaybird Leung & Du Yun**

Tickets through Dec 10: \$20 Tickets after Dec 10: \$25 Festival pass: \$175

Tickets at 212 501 3330 or ecstaticmusicfestival.com

Presented in association with New Amsterdam Presents. WQXR and Q2 Music are the media partners of the Ecstatic Music Festival. Q2 Music is the festival's digital venue and will be the center for on-demand artist interviews and concert audio.



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