NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY and THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA present

“What I Hear”

A SPECIAL BSO PRELUDE PROGRAM
WITH ANTHONY DAVIS
MODERATED BY ERIC VALLIERE
MUSICAL DIRECTION BY STEPHEN DRURY

9 MARCH 2023 * 5:30 PM * WILLIAMS HALL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANTHONY DAVIS</th>
<th>Middle Passage</th>
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<tr>
<td>(b. 1951)</td>
<td>Joseph Vasconi ’23, piano</td>
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<th>Still Waters III</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Chao ’23, flute</td>
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<td>Jonah Kernis ’25, cello</td>
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<td>Ariel Mo ’24 GD, piano</td>
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<th>ALVIN SINGLETON</th>
<th>Be Natural</th>
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<tr>
<td>(b. 1940)</td>
<td>Shannon Ross ’24 MM, Kei Otake ’24 MM, cello</td>
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<td>Jesse Dale ’24 MM, double bass</td>
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<th>ANTHONY DAVIS</th>
<th>“They Wanted a Girl” Margru’s aria from Amistad</th>
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<td>Gayeon Lee ’23 MM, soprano</td>
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<td>Christina Wright-Ivanova *, piano</td>
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* faculty

The Boston Symphony Orchestra will perform Anthony Davis’ You Have the Right to Remain Silent, Anthony McGill clarinet soloist, tonight at 7:30 p.m. in Symphony Hall.
They wanted a girl

I could tell by their looks, their touches, the way they handled me, they wanted a girl.
They thought I was a virgin.
Even these men here, in this prison, call me the girl.
They think I’m a virgin.
They got what they wanted, a slight girl, with slim hips and small breasts.
They don’t know I left a baby wrapped in cloth waiting for his milk.
He is lying in his cloth on the ground under my mother’s gaze in my house of grass,
in a small round house on barren heartless soil where the wind blows all but the goats away.
His cloth was orange with sea shells on it.
I kept him wrapped tight to my back, except that afternoon, when I went for food.
When they took me my milk flowed down the dirt trails, down my legs and arms on the rusty irons.
And yes, I helped to kill the men. I cut one of those sailors in his chest.
I was not afraid to die. I was afraid I could not get back where I still live my life.
I’m still caught in a step on my way back to a pallet on the ground, my baby wrapped in sea shells,
waiting for his milk.

– Thulani Davis

ANTHONY DAVIS

As a composer, Davis is best known for his operas. X, The Life and Times of Malcolm X, which played to
sold-out houses at its premiere at the New York City Opera in 1986, was the first of a new American
genre: opera on a contemporary political subject. A new production of a revised version was launched in
May 2022 at Detroit Opera and directed by Robert O’Hara. The premiere recording of X was released on
the Gramavision label in August 1992 and received a Grammy Nomination for “Best Contemporary
Classical Composition” in February 1993. A new recording with BMOP and Odyssey Opera was released
in October 2022. Davis won a Pulitzer Prize for his recent opera, The Central Park Five. Davis’s second
opera, Under the Double Moon, a science fiction opera with an original libretto by Deborah Atherton,
premiered at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis in June 1989. His third opera, Tania, with a libretto by
Michael-John LaChiusa and based on the abduction of Patricia Hearst, premiered at the American Music
Theater Festival in June 1992. A recording of Tania was released in 2001 on Koch, and in November 2003,
Musikwerkstatt Wien presented its European premiere. A fourth opera, Amistad, about a shipboard
uprising by slaves and their subsequent trial, premiered at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in November 1997.
Set to a libretto by poet Thulani Davis, the librettist of X, Amistad was staged by George C. Wolfe.