



New England  
Conservatory

# Concert Program

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# Welcome to NEC!

I am thrilled to share New England Conservatory's 2023-24 concert season—a celebration of the power of music to connect and inspire one another.

Whether you are seated in one of our concert halls or watching online, we hope you are uplifted by the performances of our students, faculty, and guest artists.

Above all, we thank you for your support of our students as they cultivate their artistry and contribute to the world through music.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long trailing line.

Andrea Kalyn  
President

*Embracing Coretta:*  
A Celebration of Singer, Activist, Wife and Mother  
Coretta Scott King

*ensemble*

Sarah Joyce Cooper, soprano

Melissa Joseph, soprano

Daon Drisdorn, tenor

Neil Nelson, bass-baritone

Timothy Steele, piano

Cynthia A. Harmon, narrator

*This event is presented by  
NEC's Office of Cultural Equity and Belonging  
and Embrace Boston*

*as a celebration of the 70th anniversary of Coretta Scott King's graduation from NEC.  
Through narration and song, Coretta's life story will be shared in a program featuring  
primarily African American composers.*

*The concert is a sabbatical project by NEC faculty member Timothy Steele.*

Monday, October 30, 2023

7:30 p.m.

NEC's Jordan Hall

## PROGRAM

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Cynthia A. Harmon, narrator  
Timothy Steele, piano

### **Spiritual**

Shelton Becton, arr.  
(b. 1953)

### ***A Balm in Gilead***

Ensemble

### **American Folk Ballad**

Jay Althouse, arr.  
(b. 1951)

### ***Poor Wayfaring Stranger***

Daon Drisdorn, tenor

### **Florence B. Price**

(1887–1953)  
Text by Langston Hughes

### ***We Have Tomorrow***

Sarah Joyce Cooper, soprano

### **George Frideric Handel**

(1685–1759)

### ***Thanks Be to Thee***

Neil Nelson, bass-baritone

### **Adolphus Hailstork**

(b. 1941)  
Text by Martin Luther King Jr.

### ***Justice from Songs of Love and Justice***

Melissa Joseph, soprano

### **Claude Debussy**

(1862–1918)  
Text by Paul Bourget

### ***Romance***

Daon Drisdorn, tenor

**Amadeo Roldán**  
(1900–1939)  
Texts by Nicolás Guillén

from *Motivos de Son*  
Negro Bembón  
Ayé Me Dijeron Negro  
Sigue

Sarah Joyce Cooper, soprano

**H. T. Burleigh**  
(1866–1949)  
Text by James Weldon Johnson

*Your Eyes So Deep*  
  
Melissa Joseph, soprano

**Florence B. Price**  
Text by Nora Connelly

*God Gives Me You: A Wedding Song*  
  
Neil Nelson, bass-baritone

**Charles Lloyd, Jr.**  
(b. 1938)  
Text by Paul Laurence Dunbar

*Compensation*  
  
Sarah Joyce Cooper, soprano

**Alma Androzzo**  
(1912–2001)  
arr. George L. Salva  
Text by Alma Androzzo

*If I Can Help Somebody*  
  
Daon Drisdorn, tenor

*Intermission*

**Spiritual**

*A Balm in Gilead*  
  
Ensemble

**Jacqueline Hairston**  
(b. 1932)  
Text by Jacqueline Hairston

*She Sat Down... for Freedom*  
(*In Memoriam for Rosa Parks*)

Sarah Joyce Cooper

**Adolphus Hailstork**  
Text by Martin Luther King Jr.

*Love from Songs of Love and Justice*

Melissa Joseph, soprano

**Lena McLin**  
(1928–2023)  
Text by Lina McGlin

*He Came to Alabama*

Neil Nelson, bass-baritone

**Spiritual**  
Hall Johnson, arr.  
(1888–1970)

*Honor, Honor*

Daon Drisdome, tenor

**Spiritual**  
Julia Perry, arr.  
(1924–1979)

*Free At Last*

Ensemble

**Spiritual**  
Margaret Bonds, arr.  
(1913–1972)

*Hold On*

Neil Nelson, bass-baritone

**Robert MacGimsey**  
(1898–1979)  
Text by Robert MacGimsey

*Sweet Little Jesus Boy*

Melissa Joseph, soprano

**Spiritual**  
Hall Johnson, arr.

*Witness*

Daon Drisdome, tenor

**Spiritual**

Roland Carter, arr.  
(b. 1942)

***Oh, Freedom!***

Melissa Joseph, Sarah Joyce Cooper, soprano

**Thomas A. Dorsey**

(1899–1993)

Text by Thomas A. Dorsey

***Precious Lord***

Ensemble

**Dave Ragland**

Text by Gwendolyn Brooks

***Martin Luther King Jr.***

Sarah Joyce Cooper, soprano

**H. Lesley Adams**

(b. 1932)

Text by James Weldon Johnson

***Sence You Went Away***

Neil Nelson, bass-baritone

**J. Jakari Rush**

(b. 1990)

Excerpt from a letter from  
Martin Luther King Jr.

***Dear Coretta* (2023)**

*World Premiere*

Daon Drisdorn, tenor

**Spiritual**

Moses Hogan, arr.  
(1957–2003)

***He's Got the Whole World in His Hands***

Sarah Joyce Cooper, soprano

**TEXTS** (some Spiritual texts are abbreviated)

### **A Balm in Gilead**

There is a Balm in Gilead  
to make the wounded whole.  
There is a Balm in Gilead  
to heal the sinsick soul.

*Spiritual*

### **Poor Wayfaring Stranger**

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger  
trav'ling through this world of woe.  
But there's no sickness, toil, nor danger  
in that fair land to which I go.

*American Folk Ballad*

### **We Have Tomorrow**

We have tomorrow,  
Bright before us  
Like a flame.

Yesterday,  
a night-gone thing,  
A sun-down name.

And dawn today,  
Broad arch above the road we came.

*Langston Hughes*

### **Thanks Be to Thee**

Thanks be to Thee!  
Thou hast led forth Thy chosen folk, Israel, safe through the sea.



As a good shepherd leads forth his flock, Lord,  
Thine own hand tended them; yea, in Thy goodness gave them Thy grace.

*Translated by Willis Wager*

## Justice

When evil men plot, good men must plan.  
When evil men burn and bomb, good men must build and bind.  
When evil men shout ugly words of hatred, good men must commit themselves to  
the glories of love.  
When evil men would seek to perpetuate an unjust status quo, good men must seek  
to bring into being a real order of justice.

*Martin Luther King Jr.*

## Romance

*L'âme évaporée et souffrante,  
L'âme douce, l'âme odorante  
Des lis divins que j'ai cueillis  
Dans le jardin de ta pensée,  
Où donc les vents l'ont-ils chassée,  
Cette âme adorable des lis?*

*N'est-il plus un parfum qui reste  
De la suavité céleste  
Des jours où tu m'enveloppais  
D'une vapeur surnaturelle,  
Faites d'espoir, d'amour fidèle,  
De béatitude et de paix?*

Paul Bourget

## Romance

The fleeting and suffering soul,  
the gentle soul, the soul fragrant  
with divine lilies which I have gathered  
in the garden of your thoughts.  
Where have the winds driven  
that adorable soul of the lilies?

Is there any remaining fragrance  
of the heavenly loveliness  
of those days when you enveloped me  
in a celestial haze,  
days made of hope, faithful love,  
of blessedness and peace?

## **Negro Bembón**

*¿Po qué te pone tan brabo  
Cuando te disen negro bembón  
Si tiene la boca santa  
Negro bembón?*

*Bembón así como ere  
Tiene de to;  
Caridá te mantiene  
Te lo dá to*

*Te queja todavía  
Negro bembón;  
Sin pega y con harina  
Negro bembón  
Majagua de dri blanco  
Negro bembón;  
Sapato de do tono  
Negro bembón...*

*Bembón así como ere  
Tiene de to;  
Caridá te mantiene  
Te lo dá to*

## **Ayér Me Dijeron Negro**

*Ayer me dijeron negro  
Pa que me fajara yo:  
Pero el que me lo decía  
Era un negro como yo  
Tan blanco como te ve  
Y tu abuela sé quien é  
¡Sácala de la cocina,  
Mama Iné!  
Mama Iné, tu bien lo sabe;  
Mama Iné, yo bien lo sé;  
Mama Iné, te dice nieta,  
Mama Iné!*

## **Sigue**

*Camina, caminante,  
sigue;  
camina y no te pare,*

## **Black Bembón**

Why do you get so upset when they call you 'black bembón'? Bembón, Caridá supports you and gives you everything. You still complain!

## **Yesterday they called me 'negro'**

Yesterday they called me 'negro'  
to make me fight,  
but the one who said it  
was a black man like me.  
You see yourself as white,  
but I know your grandma.  
Take her out of the kitchen!  
Mama Iné, I know you very well.

Keep going, walker, and don't stop.

*sigue.*

*Cuando pase po su casa  
no le diga que me bite:  
camina, caminante,  
sigue.*

*Sigue y no te pare,  
sigue:  
no la mire si te llama,  
sigue;*

*acuéddate que ella e mala,  
sigue.*

Nicolás Guillén

When you pass by her house, keep going

and don't look at her.

Remember that she is bad!

## **Your Eyes So Deep**

Your eyes so deep and tender are,  
soft with the glamor of a star,  
bright with the gentle light that lies  
in placid streams and sunny skies.  
Your eyes so tender are,  
and yet those melting, smiling eyes,  
from out their depths so sweet  
have lanced a cruel, piercing dart;  
and now my wounded, bleeding heart  
Lies captive at your feet.

Your lips are like a sweet, red rose  
That in some scented garden grows;  
A dewy rose, so sweet and red,  
That blooms amidst a Lily bed.  
Your lips are like a rose.  
And yet, those velvet-petal'd lips  
A honey'd poison brew,  
That through my veins has run like fire,  
And filled my soul with love's desire,  
And left me mad for you.

*James Weldon Johnson*

## God Gives Me You

Because you hold my hand and say "I do",  
before love's altar I pledge my soul to you.  
All through my life this promise will hold true,  
because within this hour God gives me you.  
Thy spirit soars on wings of visions fair;  
from out the space of life you called to me there.  
With gifts of love I came endowed anew,  
because within this hour God gives me you.  
Love's conquering peace becalms my restless soul,  
and angels sing as our hearts they enroll.  
Throughout life's day my vows I will hold true,  
because within this hour God gave me you.

*Nora Connelly*

## Compensation

Because I had loved so deeply,  
Because I had loved so long,  
God gave, in His great compassion,  
the gift of song.

*Paul Laurence Dunbar*

## If I Can Help Somebody

If I can help somebody as I pass along,  
If I can cheer somebody with a word or song,  
If I can show somebody He is trav'ling wrong,  
Then my living shall not be in vain.

If I can do my duty as a Christian ought,  
If I can bring back beauty to a world up-wrought,  
If I can spread love's message that the Master taught,  
Then my living shall not be in vain.

*Alma Androzso*

## **A Balm in Gilead**

There is a Balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.  
There is a Balm in Gilead to heal the sinsick soul.  
Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain,  
but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

*Spiritual*

## **She Sat Down for Freedom**

She sat down for Freedom!  
Not seeing what this would lead to, she sat down 'cause she was simply tired.  
Tired in body, tired in mind, but not tired in Spirit.  
Her faith was strong!  
Did she even know what she started?  
She must have sensed that it was time to make a change.  
And little did she know what that change would bring about.  
*Oh Freedom over me!*  
*Oh, I ain't weary yet,*  
*'cause there's no time for me to fret.*  
*I'll not rest till I know all are free.*  
Who is this Pioneer of Freedom?  
Who fought the good fight?  
Rosa Louise McCauley Parks!  
Has she died in vain?  
I think not!  
For there is a Balm in Gilead for Rosa Parks.  
She'll always be an icon, Mother of Civil Rights, Rosa Parks!  
She will always be a lasting legacy for now and forevermore!

*Jacqueline Hairston*

## **Love**

Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.

*Martin Luther King Jr.*

## **He Came to Alabama**

He came to Alabama one strong to right a wrong.  
He led in Alabama thousands strong to right a wrong.  
They prayed in Alabama thousands strong to right a wrong, marching and hoping  
for freedom and justice for all.  
As they knelt, inclined in single thought, they cried: 'Holy, Holy, oh God, hear our  
prayer!'  
Then came southern law, clothed in justice garb: 'Get them! Bash their heads in!  
Strike them as they kneel! Turn on the fire hose! Use the billy club!  
Let the gun butts pound! Fill the jails to the brim!'  
But they stood with heads unbowed, led by a man unafraid, and said:  
'We shall not be moved.  
Jails cannot hold us;  
liberty enfolds us.  
With prayer we will go on.  
The Lord is on our side.  
Standing in silence  
we fear no violence.  
We shall not be moved.'  
Marching and hoping for freedom and justice for all, he led from Alabama the nation  
strong to right its wrong.

*Lena McLin*

## **Honor, Honor**

King Jesus lit the candle by the waterside to see  
the little children when they're truly baptized.  
Honor, honor unto the dyin' Lamb.

*Spiritual*

## **Free at Last**

Free at last, free at last,  
I thank God I'm free at last!  
Serve you Lord while I have breath;  
see my Jesus after death,  
I thank God I'm free at last!

*Spiritual*

## **Hold On**

Noah, let me come in;  
door's all fastened and the window's pinned.  
Keep your hand on the plow;  
hold on, hold on.

*Spiritual*

## **Sweet Little Jesus Boy**

Sweet Little Jesus Boy,  
they made You be born in a manger.  
Sweet Little Holy Child,  
didn't know who You was.  
Didn't know You'd come to save us, Lord!  
To take our sins away.  
Our eyes was blind, we couldn't see.  
We didn't know who You was.

Long time ago, You was born  
Born in a manger low,  
Sweet Little Jesus Boy.  
The world treat You mean, Lord,  
Treat me mean, too,  
But that's how things is down here.  
We don't know who You is.

You done told us how, we is a tryin'!  
Master, You done showed us how, even when You's dyin'.  
Just seems like we can't do right;  
Look how we treated You.  
But please, Sir, forgive us, Lord.  
We didn't know 'twas You.

*Robert MacGimsey*

## **Witness**

Oh Lord, what manner of man is this?  
All nations in Him are blest.  
All things are done by His will.  
He spoke to the sea and the sea stood still.

Now ain't that a witness for my Lord?  
My soul is a witness for my Lord.

*Spiritual*

## **Oh, Freedom!**

Oh freedom! Oh freedom over me!  
And before I'd be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave,  
and go home to my Lord, and be free!  
No more mourning over me.

*Spiritual*

## **Precious Lord**

Precious Lord, take my hand.  
Lead me on, let me stand.  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.

Through the storm, through the night,  
lead me on to the light.  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

*Thomas A. Dorsey*

## **Martin Luther King Jr.**

A man went forth with gifts.

He was a prose poem.  
He was a tragic grace.  
He was a warm music.



He tried to heal the vivid volcanoes.  
His ashes are  
    reading the world.

His Dream still wishes to anoint  
    the barricades of faith and control.

His word still burns the center of the sun  
    above the thousands and the  
    hundred thousands.

The word was Justice. It was spoken.

So it shall be spoken.  
So it shall be done.

*Gwendolyn Brooks*

### **Sence You Went Away**

Seems like to me the stars don't shine so bright.  
Seems like to me the sun done lost his light.  
Seems like to me there's nothin' going' right  
sence you went away.

Seems like to me the sky ain't half so blue.  
Seems like to me that everything wants you.  
Seems like to me I don't know what to do  
sence you went away.

Oh, everything is wrong.  
the day's just twice as long.  
The bird's forgot his song  
sence you went away.

Seems like to me I just can't help but sigh.  
Seems like to me my throat keeps gettin' dry.  
Seems like to me a tear stays in my eye  
sence you went away.

*James Weldon Johnson*

## Dear Coretta

Coretta,  
my love for you is based on a solid foundation that the stormy winds of anger cannot blow it asunder.  
Love is such a dynamic force, inexplicable, and yet the most beautiful force.  
Oh, how joyous it is!  
My life without you is like a year without a springtime, giving illumination from the dark cold of winter.  
Imagine a King without a throne.  
Such would be if I could not reign at the throne of Coretta.

*Adapted from a love letter from Martin Luther King Jr.*

## He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

He's got the whole world in His hands.  
He's got you an' me, brother, in His hands.  
He's got you an' me, sister in His hands.  
He's got the little bitty baby in His hands.  
He's got the whole world in His hands.

*Spiritual*

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This list reflects  
 those who  
 contributed to  
 The NEC Fund  
 and our annual  
 scholarship  
 appeal between  
 July 1, 2022 and  
 June 30, 2023.



The Fannie Cox Foundation  
 Corinne and Tim Ferguson  
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 Michael and Sarah Garrison  
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 F. Gardner and Pamela Jackson, in honor of  
     Kennett Burnes  
 Hongyu Jiang and Xiaojun Li, in honor of  
     Anait Arutunian  
 Claire Johnson, in honor of Paul Johnson  
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 Susan Katzenberg, in honor of Diane Katzenberg Braun  
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 Peter D. Kaye '97, in honor of Ran Blake  
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 Ruth Shefer and Earl S. Marmar  
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 Mr. Thomas A. Wilkins '82  
 Judith Kogan and Hugh Wolff  
 Ms. Janet Wu  
 Allan Yudacufski  
 J Zhou and Xuqiong Wu, in honor of Peter Jarvis

*\*deceased*

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