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Conservatory



Concert Program

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Welcome to NEC!

I am thrilled to share New England Conservatory's 2024-25 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, appearing to read "Andrea Kalyn". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Andrea Kalyn
President

ONE SOUL. ONE DREAM.

MARCH 8TH | 8:00PM
JORDAN HALL

FREE ADMISSION
www.necmusic.edu/concerts

ARTWORK:
"PENSIVITY"
BY EKUA HOLMES



A CORETTA SCOTT KING TRIBUTE CO-CURATED BY
NEC'S BLACK STUDENT UNION & CASTLE OF OUR SKINS

Saturday, March 8, 2025
8:00 p.m.
NEC's Jordan Hall

One Soul. One Dream

Soul. What is the soul? Perhaps it encompasses more than just the physical? Dream. What is the dream? A world in which all are created equal? But what is One? Perhaps unity of thought, of sentiment, of essence... of Purpose. These ideas conjure the spirit representative of Coretta Scott King. A woman with an insatiable belief in all that is good. Alongside her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, they built a dream with imagination beyond the confines of their time. They believed in the power and tenacity of the human spirit. The ability to overcome, the belief in more than what meets the eye. Together they shared a dream—that freedom is on the horizon. It will just take hard work and determination to yield the outcome of liberation.

We display this through the lens of Coretta's history- her Bloodline, sharing the sentiments of her youth. The power of love in her home life and upbringing. As she grows older—into the midst of the Civil Rights struggle—we are Within Reach of what can be better. It is a testament to her tenacity and unyielding belief that these dreams remain unchanged. It is through the exploration and work of these dreams that she embraces her Beloved Community. Coretta was not created in a vacuum. All of the people in her life helped make her dreams a reality.

We are very excited and proud to share this program with you! A culmination of traditional Nigerian and African American tunes, works from new to old... the broad scope of the program reflects upon our Beloved Community. The fight for freedom never ceases, as neither does the community.

– Emma Boyd '25, violin

PROGRAM

Narrations written by
Shileta Peregrino Cezario, * Ashleigh Gordon, and Chasity Thompson,
and spoken by
+ Naomi Robinson and + Aryana Martin

Part I:
BLOOD-LINES

Freedom Song

Oh Freedom

Richard Taylor, trumpet

Jimmy Rowles

The Peacocks

Woody Pierre, trumpet
Solomon Caldwell, double bass

William Grant Still
(1895–1978)

from *Lyric Quartette:*
Musical Portraits of Three Friends (1960)
I. The Sentimental One

Sydney Scarlett, Kearston Gonzales, violin
Emma Boyd, viola
Alex Aranzabal, cello

Solomon Kehinde Oretimehin

Magbagbemi

Ogechi Victoria Okoye, soprano
Sydney Scarlett, Kearston Gonzales, violin
Emma Boyd, viola
Alex Aranzabal, cello

**Part II:
WITHIN REACH**

Civil Rights Protest Song

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

Richard Taylor, trumpet

Andre Myers

Falling Skyward for solo flute

‡ Jalen Seapker, flute

Carlos Simon
(b. 1986)

Hold Fast to Dreams

Dreamy

Funky

Animato

Light

Daniela Pyne, soprano

Victor Ikpe, tenor

§ Cailin Marcel Manson, baritone

§ Ellen Annor-Adjei, piano

**Part III:
THE BELOVED COMMUNITY**

Adolphus C. Hailstork III
(b. 1941)

Morning Song

Shileta Peregrino Cezario, mezzo-soprano
Chasity Thompson, clarinet

Civil Rights Protest Song

Woke Up This Morning With My Mind

Richard Taylor, trumpet

Maxwell Fairman '26

Duo for Flute and Clarinet

‡ Jalen Seapker, flute
Chasity Thompson, clarinet

Shileta Peregrino Cezario
'26 MM

All That I Am

Ogechi Victoria Okoye, soprano
Shileta Peregrino Cezario, mezzo-soprano
Maxwell Fairman, Kearston Gonzales, violin
Emma Boyd, viola
Alex Aranzabel, cello

Nigerian Folk Song

arr. Fred Onovwerosuoke

Otu b'oma

Daniela Pyne, Alexis Reese, soprano
Ogechi Victoria Okoye, Chasity Thompson,
mezzo-soprano
Victor Ikpe, tenor
Valentine Umeh, bass
Treyan Nelson, hand percussion
Bailee Green, conductor

+ *NEC faculty, staff*

* *NEC alum*

‡ *Northeastern student*

§ *guest artist*

Rowles *The Peacocks*

A haunting original by pianist Jimmy Rowles and saxophonist/producer Stan Getz.

Still *The Sentimental One* from *Lyric Quartette*

The Lyric String Quartette was written at the request of Joachim Chassman for his string quartet group. However, when the group tried it out, my Father said there was something wrong with it, and he threw it in the wastebasket. My mother took it out and saved it, and I published it after fixing a mistake in the viola part. It was an immediate hit when played, and audiences gave ovations to the "Quiet One" movement. (Everyone wanted to know who among our friends was "The Quiet One," but I have no idea. It certainly wasn't yours truly.) The Quartette stands now alongside the *Danzas* as one of the most performed American string quartets. "The Quiet One" may have been about my mother, a fine, quiet, but powerful lady, who had tremendous talent on her own.

– Judith Still, 2020

Oretimehin *Magbagbemi*

Solomon Khinde Oretimehin is a composer, songwriter, conductor, and director who has been involved in over 30 productions in the past decade. *Magbagbemi* is a touching song about remembrance and coping with the loss of a loved one, emphasizing that no matter how difficult life becomes, their presence remains in your heart.

– Ogechi Okoye

If we ever see again
As sweet as the fresh water
Love is the reason we meet again
Love that created the heaven and the earth
You are the one my heart chose
You are the water in my mouth
You are the one my heart chose
You are my heartbeat
Remember when we had much to eat
Remember when we had nothing to drink
Remember all our trips
Remember all our chats
You are the one my heart chose
You are the song on my lips
You are the one my heart has chosen
Really you are my heartbeat
Don't forget me, don't forget me, don't forget me
Remember me
My love

Myers *Falling Skyward* for solo flute

Falling Skyward is a piece of music that is as contradictory sonically as its title. Myers blends the harsh and unexpected—sudden, daring fortissimos with the delicate, often lamenting sweetness the flute is known for. Separated into three parts, *Falling*

Skyward explores the dichotomy of the brazen and timid, giving them both equally their own space to exist before uniting them together in the final act of the piece.

The sky often symbolizes expansion, freedom, and inhibition. It gives us hope that one day, we can spread our wings and join the birds in their flight. Falling, however, is quite the opposite. We fear the pain associated with it. Will we be able to get back up? Will we recover from that failure and begin anew? — *Jalen Seapker*

Simon *Hold Fast to Dreams*

This iconic poem by Langston Hughes is often presented in an optimistic, encouraging context. The words inspire us as well as warn us that "if dreams die life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly." How often do we hear words that urge us to continue to dream? Do we always believe them? Depending on the deliverer, those words can fall on deaf ears. You may ask, "is this a true or false statement?" To show that interpretation, I have composed four separate movements in different musical moods using the same text. The first three movements are for solo voice, while the last movement is performed by all three singers. Do the words ring true or false?

— *Carlos Simon*

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Langston Hughes

Hailstork *Morning Song*

The idea of a "morning song" suggests a new beginning. This piece's uplifting and lyrical character symbolizes awakening, much like how the renaissance period marked a revival of creativity and innovation. As a composer deeply influenced by African American traditions, Adolphus Hailstork contributes to a modern-day cultural renaissance by infusing classical music with African American musical heritage. While details of the piece are scarce, Hailstork is well known for his ability to craft melodies that feel both soaring and introspective. With your listen of *Morning Song*, I would like for you all to ask yourselves how does music, like a renaissance, remind us that every ending holds the promise of a new beginning?

— *Chasity Thompson*

Fairman *Duo for Flute and Clarinet*

Antonín Dvořák, a renowned Czech composer of the Romantic era, believed that American classical music should be rooted in African American musical traditions.

After visiting the United States, he stated, “The future of this country must be founded upon what are called the Negro melodies. This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States.” Dvořák’s appreciation for these influences is evident in works like his *New World Symphony* and String Quartet No. 12 in F major, “American.” While he specifically referenced Negro spirituals, the broader landscape of African American music offers a wealth of inspiration for Western classical composition.

Duo for Flute and Clarinet shows a renewed interest in Dvořák’s idea by incorporating blues elements into Western classical music. The first section is based on a modified 10-bar blues form, while the middle section features a four-bar vamp with expressive “blue notes.” The piece also employs counterpoint, an essential technique of classical music where multiple melodies intertwine to create depth and complexity.

– Maxwell Fairman

Peregrino Cezario *All That I Am*

All That I Am is a spirited composition that knits together themes of perseverance, faith, and self-determination. Scored for soprano, mezzo-soprano, violin I, violin II, viola, and cello, the piece blends lyrical vocal lines with a robust harmonic texture, creating an intimate yet powerful musical landscape. The text speaks to a journey of resilience, expressing a determination to press forward despite challenges along the way. The opening lines, “Withholding nothing...I will fight to the end, knowing that I will win,” set the tone for the narrative of divine guidance and inner strength. The recurring refrain, “All that I am, and all that I do.... I’ll press toward the mark,” reinforces the piece’s prominent message of strength and unwavering faith. Musically, *All That I Am* is characterized by the flow of its beautiful legato phrasing and expressive dynamics, with the interplay between the voices and strings heightening the emotional impact. The harmonic progressions display much warmth and depth, supporting the text’s uplifting message of hope and the power of belief. Through its fusion of text and melody, *All That I Am* serves as a testament to hope, faith, strength, perseverance, and purpose, inviting the listener into a space of inspiration, contemplation, and gratitude.

– Shileta Peregrino Cezario

Withholding nothing I will fight to the end
Knowing that I will win.
The strength of God has brought me this far
And I won’t give up now.

All that I am
And all that I do
I’ll press towards the mark.
I will see it through.

(The text continues on the following page. Please turn the page quietly.)

Deep in my heart
I still believe
That we'll overcome
Just hold fast to the faith we need.

All that I am
And all that I do
I'll press towards the mark.
I will see it through.

Shileta Peregrino Cezario

arr. Onovwerosuoke Otu b'oma

Otu b'oma means "Unity in Strength" and is a celebration island dance song. The community members are encouraged to come together to build and nurture one another.

– Fred Onovwerosuoke

Otu b'oma!
Nyagboligbo,
afo lu kwa mo,
ukwu kpo kwa mo,
ew'o
ihe si ike,
nya, na gi du m'eje,
biko were je nway'o
aha, ew'o,
egw'a di, lu-lu-lu-lu!

Unity is strength!
Things are going well,
no excuses like "my head hurts"
no excuses like "my feet hurt"
(scat syllables)
no excuses like "things are hard,"
we can do this together,
take life easy,
(scat syllables)
this is our dance.

Igbo, Nigerian Folk Song

The purpose of the **New England Conservatory Black Student Union** is to provide an open forum for Black and non-Black students who want to be more involved in the discussion about the Black experience. We desire to create a safe space in which we are able to unify and educate not only ourselves, but the greater NEC community, about our rich, unique history and culture. Our focus is to find new ways to use our gifts to spread love, combat hate, and implement positive change in our community. We share our experiences, express our ideas, and cultivate our dreams through various forms of discussion, performances and outreach.

Castle of our Skins is a Black arts institution dedicated to fostering cultural curiosity and celebrating Black artistry through music. In classrooms, concert halls, and beyond, Castle of our Skins invites Black heritage and culture exploration, spotlighting both unsung and celebrated figures of past and present.

Ellen Annor-Adjei studied piano from the age of five and subsequently attended the

Musical College of Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory. She has appeared in numerous recitals at the Arts & Letters Club, the Toronto Centre for the Arts, Glenn Gould Studio, and the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. Ms. Annor-Adjei has extensive teaching experience in Europe and North America. She was on the faculty of University Settlement Music and Arts School from 1996 to 2011 as well as continuing teaching privately and coaching chamber groups. She is the Director and Founder of the Musical Arts Academy.

Ekua Holmes' work is collage based and her subjects, made from cut and torn papers, investigate family histories, relationship dynamics, childhood impressions, the power of hope, faith, and self-determination. For her work in illustrating children's literature, Holmes is the recipient of a Caldecott Honor, Coretta Scott King's John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award, Robert Siebert and Horn Book awards for her illustrations in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* by Carole Boston Weatherford, her first illustration project. In 2018, she won the coveted Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration for the book, *Out of Wonder: Poems Celebrating Poets*. In 2019 she won the 2019 Coretta Scott King Award again for her illustrations in *Stuff of Stars*, written by Marion Dane Bauer.

Cailin Marcel Manson, baritone and conductor, a Philadelphia native, has toured as a soloist and master teacher at major concert venues throughout the United States, Europe and Asia with many organizations, including the Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, SWR Sinfonieorchester, Taipei Philharmonic, Bayerische Staatsoper - Münchner Opernfestspiele, Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Teatro La Fenice, Teatro San Carlo, Konservatorium Oslo, and the Conservatoire de Luxembourg.

Aryana Martin, Academic Program Manager & Advisor, manages several academic departments and advises string students at NEC. In addition to higher education administration, she has a background in African American and Black Diaspora literary research, with an interest in fostering inclusive learning environments and creating spaces for challenging dialogue. Aryana holds an M.Phil. in Modern and Contemporary Literary Studies from Trinity College Dublin and a B.A. in English from Emmanuel College (Boston).

Naomi Robinson, Student Employment Coordinator within the Human Resources office works with students, and sometimes faculty and staff assisting with the many functions of hiring here at NEC. Naomi has been in the Student Employment coordinator role for nearly three years, assisting and ensuring students complete all paperwork to successfully thrive in the many student employment opportunities we have here on campus. With a bachelor's degree in Computer Information Systems, Naomi combines strong technical skills with a passion for helping students navigate employment processes. Outside of work, she also pursues singing, showcasing her talent and love for music whenever she can.

Support the future of music at NEC!

Your gift to The NEC Fund has a direct and immediate impact on student scholarships, NEC's world-class faculty, and a collaborative and innovative learning environment rooted in the highest level of musical excellence.

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