

PROTESTRA

TAKE A STAND:

A CONCERT FOR BLACK LIVES

SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 AT 7:30PM

Hosted by Michelle Rofrano & Priscilla Rinehart
Panel Discussion by Christina Morris, Priscilla Rinehart,
Clérída, & Clifton Joey Guidry III

**SONATA NO. 2 IN E \flat FOR TWO VIOLINS - JOSEPH
BOLOGNE, CHEVALIER DE SAINT-GEORGES (1745-1799)**

Mitzy Nonaka, flute & Pierce Yamaoka, trumpet

**PANEL DISCUSSION PART I:
CHANGING CLASSICAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE**

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE BY CLÉRIDA

**PANEL DISCUSSION PART II:
PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN CLASSICAL MUSIC**

**THE JOYS OF BOTTOMLESS BRUNCH: A SET OF 3
IMPROVISATIONS FOR BASSOON**

Composed and performed by Clifton Joey Guidry III

STARWATER TAFFY - ALICE JONES (B. 1982)

Priscilla Rinehart, horn



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PANEL DISCUSSION PART III: DISCRIMINATION IN CLASSICAL MUSIC

TABLEAU NO. VI FOR SOLO HORN - TYSON DAVIS (B. 2000)

Priscilla Rinehart, horn

PANEL DISCUSSION PART IV: TRADITION IN CLASSICAL MUSIC

LYRIC FOR STRINGS - GEORGE WALKER (1922-2018)

PROTESTRA String Orchestra

Michelle Rofrano, conductor

TO BE

Written and performed by Christina Morris

SUMMERLAND - WILLIAM GRANT STILL (1895-1978)

Michelle Rofrano, piano and Natasha Loomis, flute

SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN D MINOR, II. ANDANTE CANTABILE -

FLORENCE PRICE (1887-1953)

PROTESTRA Orchestra

Michelle Rofrano, conductor



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ABOUT PROTESTRA

We are a newly-incorporated coalition of classical musicians ready and willing to use our art to speak out against injustice and speak truth to power. We consider it our responsibility as artists to use music to expand social consciousness and raise awareness about the pressing societal issues that affect us all, but especially the most vulnerable and marginalized among us. We plan to do so by:

- Holding benefit concerts and raising money for like-minded charities and organizations that are equally committed to the fight for social justice.
- Programming repertoire from a wide variety of composers as to reflect the diversity of the human race.
- Sharing resources and inviting knowledgeable guest speakers in order to provide our audiences with an experience that is both musical and educational.
- Being active members of our communities, whether that means donating our time and money to causes we believe in, performing community service, or joining a protest march.

We believe that music and advocacy can be one and the same. We believe that if you have a platform to affect change, you should use it. We believe that taking a stand should be the standard.

PROGRAM NOTES

Born in Guadeloupe, France, **Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges** (1745-1799) was a man of exceptional talents as a violinist, composer and swordsman. Despite facing many challenges as an illegitimate and mixed raced child, Bologne excelled beyond his years as a swordsman while simultaneously establishing himself as a composer. His debut as a soloist consisted of him performing two of his own concertos, and his first position in an orchestra was as a section leader in the first violins. Bologne would go on to compose concertantes, symphonies, operas and chamber music. (*Pierce Yamaoka*)



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Tyson Davis began composing at the age of eight years old. He entered UNCSA as a high school freshman, studying with Lawrence Dillon. He has taken advantage of numerous opportunities at the school, writing for Eighth Blackbird, the Attacca String Quartet, UNCSA Cantata Singers and the UNCSA Symphony Orchestra. In the summers, he has attended Interlochen Summer Music Camp, where he had works for chorus and percussion ensemble premiered and earned the Fine Arts Award, and Curtis Summerfest, where he worked with David Ludwig. This most recent summer Tyson work with National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America (NYO-USA) and Antonio Pappano to premiere his work, Delicate Tension, a piece that was commissioned by the American Embassy in Berlin for the 30th Anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The work was performed in Berlin, Edinburgh, and Hamburg. Since then, Tyson has started as an undergraduate at The Juilliard School where he continues his studies in composition and is a recipient of the Jerome L. Green Fellowship. To learn more about composer and Juilliard student Tyson Davis, please follow him on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/tysonjdavis/> or subscribe to his YouTube channel.

Clérída Eltimé has utilized her vocal and string talents to make her mark in classical, pop, and hip hop music. She's shared the stage with artists such as Frank Ocean, Nas, J.Cole, Stevie Wonder, and has even gone on tour with Solange. She has performed at prestigious venues such as Madison Square Garden, the NPR Tiny Desk Office, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Carnegie Hall, Central Park's SummerStage, and the Museum of Modern Art. Her primary studies were with Julia Lichen, of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, is a graduate of Purchase College (BM'- Cello Performance). While an active member of the band Standing on the Corner, Clerida is also an active freelancer in the Tri-State area, currently teaching private lessons across Long Island, and perfecting her songwriting skills for an upcoming solo project.

Clifton Joey Guidry III: "The two pieces I'm playing today are short miniatures that are about my two stages of dropping my chocolate milkshake." Please go to <https://www.guidrybassoon.com/> to learn more.



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Raised in Austin, TX, **Alice Jones** is a musician whose multi-faceted career welcomes new listeners into the world of music. As a flutist, composer, teacher, and administrator, she pushes against the boundaries of what it means to be a musician, whose voices can be heard, and what success looks like. In 2020, she became the Assistant Dean of Community Engagement and Career Services at the Juilliard School, drawing upon her wide and varied experience in music creation, education, and collaboration. Praised by Mario Davidovsky as "the flute player who could really play," she has been a featured soloist and chamber musician at the Look and Listen Festival, Composers Now Festival, the Yale-China Music Exchange in China, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and Chamber Music Campania (Italy). Alice's chamber music arrangements and compositions have been performed by the Phoenix Orchestra (Boston), University of New Mexico horn studio, and Lucera Vocal Institute (Italy). In 2020, she launched #tinyefforts2020, inviting performances of four open instrumentation solos through social media platforms. Other commissions in 2020 include a set of concert etudes for trombonist William Lang and a chamber work for soprano, horn, and piano for Amity Trio. Alice lives in Brooklyn, NY. When she's not musicking, she's likely walking her dog or making ice cream. She plays a Haynes flute and is a Haynes artist.

Natasha Loomis, a co-founder and organizer at PROTESTRA, has performed as a solo, chamber, and orchestral musician in the United States, Europe, and South America, passionate about seeking out new and overlooked gems of the repertoire in her programming. As Artistic Director of the Meraki Chamber Players, she commissioned 11 new works, and curated a program inspired by artist Wassily Kandinsky's *Compositions* and *Rhapsody in Brew*, which was premiered in collaboration with King's County Brewer's Collective. The group was a 2017 Ensemble-in-Residence at Connecticut SummerFest. Natasha has performed at the National Flute Association and Mid Atlantic Flute Conventions, as well as at Radio City Music Hall with Streetlight Manifesto, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Bryant Park stage, and others. She traveled to Lima, Perú, as a performing and teaching artist at the XXXII Festival Internacional de Flautistas. Natasha runs a private teaching studio in NJ and NYC and has served as the Assistant Director at NJ Woodwind Studio, on the flute faculty at Rutgers University and Montclair State University's Extension Divisions, and as a chamber coach at NJ Youth Symphony.



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Christina Morris is currently a fourth year undergraduate student studying Musical Studies with a concentration in Music Theory at the Crane School of Music. As a young aspiring orchestral conductor, Christina Morris has been accepted to work with amazing individuals and organizations such as The National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America as Conducting apprentice to Maestro Micheal Tilson Thomas, Miami Music Festival under Maestro Mark Gibson, and the Tanglewood Music Center under the instruction of Maestro Stefan Asbury.

Flutist **Mitzy Nonaka** brings energy and enthusiasm to a wide range of stages, with a focus on contemporary, orchestral, and studio music performances. A Brazilian-born immigrant of Japanese descent, identity within classical music and musical accessibility across cultures and income ranges drive Mitzy's activism for change within the industry.

Florence Price was prodigious in every sense of the word: by the age of four, she was already playing piano recitals; by 11, she had published her first composition. Price graduated high school as valedictorian at 14, then attended the prestigious New England Conservatory and matriculated in just two years. She was the only student (out of 2,000) to pursue a double major, earning degrees in both piano and organ performance. As it happens, she almost certainly inspired another composer on our program, William Grant Still, who was eight years Price's junior and also grew up in Little Rock; their families knew each other well and the two would remain lifelong friends.

As a Black woman living through the Jim Crow Era, Price was no stranger to adversity or discrimination, but she steeled herself against any and all obstacles to her progress. When faced with overwhelming hardship that would surely break a less resolute person, Price flourished and entered a period of great creativity that led to a staggering compositional output of more than 400 works. Price's breakthrough came in 1931 with her award-winning "Symphony in E Minor," which, two years later, would earn her the distinction of becoming the first Black woman to have a composition performed by a major American orchestra (in this case, the all-white, all-male Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock).

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Price's tenacious personality came through in her teaching and her music. Her students described her as kind and gentle, but capable of speaking quite sternly and forcefully when merited, and we can hear elements of each in this evening's selection, the "Andante cantabile" from her Fourth Symphony. The oboe begins with the melody, a sweet and reassuring tune that almost sounds like a lullaby or spiritual; this becomes even more apparent when solo viola takes up the line and sings it with soulful portamenti. Much of Price's musical language was rooted in what she referred to as the "Negro folk idiom," the unique musical style created by Black Americans—for example, in the first movement of this symphony, Price directly quotes the well-known spiritual "Wade in the Water." Price often utilized these melodies in her compositions and engaged in what we might now refer to as musical code-switching, this blending of the "classical" and the "vernacular."

Although Price's music is undergoing a well-deserved renaissance to a certain degree, it is still relatively unknown and remains woefully under-programmed by American orchestras. If Florence Price had been born a white man, she would, without question, currently be regarded as one of the greatest composers in our country's musical history. Her art songs and piano works would resonate from the stages of recital halls nationwide. Her Violin Concerto No. 2, a highly exploratory work of cinematic splendor, would sit alongside contemporary staples like those written by Barber and Korngold. Her symphonies—bold and vivacious, yet lyrical and contemplative—would be hailed as the paragon of American neo-Romanticism. Although the conductors and publishers of the day were unable to look past Price's superficial characteristics, hopefully we can now appreciate how much of a trailblazer she was, and how important her contributions to American music were. It's long past time for us to acknowledge that Florence Price mattered, her voice mattered, and her music mattered.

Florida native **Priscilla Rinehart** came to the Sarasota Orchestra from Miami Beach, where she was a Fellow at the New World Symphony. Playing the horn has allowed her to travel across the globe and countless opportunities to expand her understanding of people and societies. In 2019, she performed for the first time with Chineke! Orchestra in London, Sphinx Symphony Orchestra in Detroit and Gateways Music Festival in Rochester, NY. These three organizations assert cultural variety in the representation of classical music through programming choices and dynamic concerts. Motivated by their efforts and the Black Lives Matter movement, Priscilla is working to better serve marginalized people inside and outside concert halls. She will seek community with those who share a similar vision for the future of humanity — a future that requires action in order to achieve justice.

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Conductor **Michelle Rofrano** is driven by her passion for storytelling and using music to affect social change. She has a strong background as an opera conductor and has led productions with The Glimmerglass Festival; the Crane School of Music; Westminster Choir College; DC Public Opera; Oberlin in Italy opera festival; and the New Jersey Opera Project. She has served as assistant conductor with Florida Grand Opera; Spoleto Festival USA; Opera Birmingham; and The Glimmerglass Festival, including the premiere production of Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's *Blue*. Upcoming engagements include conducting the premiere of *Virgula Divina* with Pittsburgh Festival Opera; making her company debut with City Lyric Opera; and working with the opera department of The Juilliard School. Rofrano enjoys performing orchestral repertoire in addition to opera and has recently led concerts with the Spoleto Festival USA orchestra and CJMEA youth orchestra. As co-founder and Music & Artistic Director of PROTESTRA, Rofrano strives to illuminate social justice issues with diverse orchestral concert programming.

On July 23, 1936, **William Grant Still** (1895-1978) made history as the first African-American to conduct a major American orchestra, leading the LA Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. His long and illustrious career encompassed many firsts: his *Symphony No. 1* was the first complete work composed by a Black composer to be performed by a major American orchestra (Rochester Philharmonic, 1931); he was the first Black conductor to conduct a major orchestra in the Deep South (New Orleans Philharmonic, 1955); his opera *A Bayou Legend* was the first by a Black composer to be performed on national television (1981). He received honorary doctorates from prestigious institutions including Peabody Conservatory, New England Conservatory, Oberlin College, Howard University, and several more over the course of his life. He was a prominent figure in the Harlem Renaissance, regularly writing about the struggles facing Black citizens in America, and fondly referred to as "the Dean" by other African-American composers. *Summerland*, written in 1937, is the second of his *Three Visions* for solo piano, which the composer later adapted for orchestra. Following the ominously driving *Dark Horseman* of the first vision, *Summerland* is intended to be a welcome respite, a vision of the promised beauty of the afterlife or Heaven.



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George Walker is one of the most influential African-American musicians recognized in classical music. He set many firsts in the industry, such as being the only one in his time to not only be respected as a performer, but as a composer and educator as well. Walker graduated with a double degree in piano performance and composition from the Curtis Institute of Music. He would later become the first African-American to earn his doctoral degree from the Eastman School of Music. In his later years, Walker became the first African-American to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music, solidifying him as a staple of inspiration and hope for African-American success in classical music. George Walker originally composed the theme later called *Lyric for Strings* as a movement of his String Quartet No. 1. The theme was first conceived in 1946, as a tribute to his grandmother who passed away that same year. The movement was then arranged for string orchestra and premiered under the title *Lament* by the student orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music, conducted by Seymour Lipkin. Walker later titled the work *Lyric for Strings*. It has gone on to become one of the most internationally recognized works of music composed by an African-American musician and is still performed by respected orchestras to this day. (Christina Morris)

Trumpeter **Pierce Yamaoka** recently finished his Master's Degree at Indiana University where he was the recipient of the Charles Gorham Trumpet Scholarship and studied with Edmund Cord and Kris Kwapis. During his time in Indiana, Pierce performed with the Indianapolis Brass Ensemble, Lafayette Symphony Orchestra and was a substitute musician for the Columbus and Terre Haute Symphony. Prior to studying in Indiana, Pierce has enjoyed a varied performing career with the Fresno Philharmonic, Sequoia Symphony, San Francisco Composer's Chamber Orchestra and the Sequoia Brass Quartet. Since relocating to New York City, Pierce is currently on faculty at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and enjoys being an organizer on the PROTESTRA team.



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ALL DONATIONS WILL BENEFIT:

Founded by oboist Jasmine Daquin, **Black Classical Music Educators (BCME)** is an online space that makes it easy for students to easily secure private lessons with a Black classical music educator and provides a community for Black classical music educators to professionally engage with each other.

The **NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund** is America's premier legal organization fighting for racial justice. Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, LDF seeks structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The Lacher-Vlahović Family

Evan Young

Jay Julio

Nick Gonzalez

Community Presbyterian Church in Ringwood, NJ

Our production team: Shane Brown and Ian Vlahović



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OBOE MARCUS PHILLIPS CAT CANTRELL ENGLISH HORN
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STROINSKI BASS CLARINET MATT LEVINE BASSOON KIKA
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