Deep River

WITH

One City Choir
David F. Coleman, Choirmaster

Coro Allegro
David Hodgkins, Artistic Director

July 31, 2019
7 pm
at the DCR’s Hatch Shell

SPONSORED BY:

Encore
BOSTON HARBOR
Deep River
Boston Landmarks Orchestra | Christopher Wilkins, Music Director
Boston Landmarks One City Choir | David F. Coleman, Choirmaster
Coro Allegro | David Hodgkins, Artistic Director

Festive Overture
William Grant Still
(1895-1978)

Lyric for Strings
George Walker
(1922-2018)

Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel
Traditional
Alvy Powell, bass-baritone
arr. Lawrence Brown

Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho
Traditional
Sirgourney Cook, soprano
arr. Margaret Bonds

I Got a Home in that Rock
Traditional
Sirgourney Cook, soprano
arr. Margaret Bonds

He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand
Traditional
Alvy Powell, bass-baritone
arr. Margaret Bonds

Deep River (from A Child of Our Time)
Traditional, arr. Michael Tippett
(1905-1998)
Sirgourney Cook, soprano
Myran Parker-Brass, mezzo-soprano
Davron S. Monroe, tenor
Hon. Milton Wright, bass
David F. Coleman, conductor

The Chariot Jubilee
R. Nathaniel Dett
(1882-1943)
orch. Hale Smith
Davron S. Monroe, tenor

We NEED To TALK: Work for Soloists, Chorus, & Orchestra
Fred Onovrewosuoke
(b. 1960)
(Text from the poem “We Need to Talk” by Michael Castro (1945-2018), from his collection
We Need to Talk: Selected and New Poems, published by the Singing Bone Press)
Tai Oney, countertenor
Jonas Budris, tenor
David Hodgkins, conductor
INTERMISSION

The *Show Boat* Concert *

Jennifer Ellis, *soprano*
Sirgourney Cook, *soprano*
Carolyn Saxon, *soprano*
Matthew DiBattista, *tenor*
Alvy Powell, *bass-baritone*

Coro Allegro
One City Choir
Members of Black Nativity
Members of New England Spiritual Ensemble

Overture
Cotton Blossom
Where’s the Mate for Me?
Make Believe
Ol’ Man River
Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man
Misery Theme
You Are Love
Sports of Gay Chicago
Why Do I Love You?
Bill
Ol’ Man River (reprise)

Orchestra
Chorus
Mr. DiBattista
Ms. Ellis & Mr. DiBattista
Mr. Powell
Ms. Cook
Ms. Saxon & Chorus
Ms. Ellis & Mr. DiBattista
Chorus
Ms. Ellis & Mr. DiBattista
Ms. Cook
Mr. Powell & Chorus

David F. Coleman, Choirmaster

* Repertoire championed by Arthur Fiedler (1894-1979)
save the date

BOSTON LANDMARKS ORCHESTRA

gala

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019
6:00 PM.
The Royal Sonesta

Please save the date and join us in honoring

THE LEGACY OF MAESTRO

Arthur Fiedler

AND 90 YEARS OF FREE CONCERTS AT THE HATCH SHELL

and

THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF

Conservation and Recreation

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019

THE ROYAL SONESTA
40 Edwin Land Boulevard, Cambridge, MA 02142

For Sponsorship Opportunities
and more information please contact
Brenda Main at 617-587-2000
bmain@landmarkorchestra.org

Formal invitation to follow
Dear Concertgoers,

When it comes to celebrating the towering legacy of Maestro Arthur Fiedler, it is hard to know just where to begin. There is so much to say about his legendary musicianship, his brilliant conducting career with the Boston Pops, and his lasting impact on music in the United States and the world. For Boston Landmarks Orchestra, we must begin right here on the Esplanade 90 years ago in 1929, when Arthur Fiedler started a proud and lasting tradition of free orchestral concerts performed by professional musicians at the Hatch Shell on the banks of the Charles River. We look just across Storrow Drive from where we are sitting to see the Arthur Fiedler Footbridge that leads to this special, some would even say sacred space. And though Fiedler died 40 years ago this year, we’re thrilled that his spirit is always with us in the form of inspiration, and—literally—in the magnificent stone bust highlighting his iconic profile and that sits just behind us on the Esplanade looking out over the river.

President Jimmy Carter said that Fiedler “knew how to take music seriously without taking the fun out of it, and he shared that gift with all of us.” Leonard Bernstein said that Fiedler “was probably the most popular single conductor in the world. He will be sorely missed . . . for his generous and ebullient nature, his integrity, and his inspiring energy. He was unique and irreplaceable.”

In addition to all of these things, Arthur Fiedler had, in the words of former long-time Boston Globe classical music critic Richard Dyer, “an evangelical zeal to make concert music available to people who might not otherwise be able to hear it in live performance.” It is for this reason that we proudly celebrate this important anniversary throughout our 2019 season, and at our 2019 Gala on October 22, 2019. And we strive every day to keep Arthur Fiedler’s Hatch Shell legacy alive.

During each Boston Landmarks Orchestra concert week this season, you will hear musical selections that were among Fiedler’s favorites. These pieces will be highlighted on the program page with an asterisk signifying repertoire championed by Arthur Fiedler (1894-1979). Many of these works are staples of the pops and light classical repertoire (Dance of the Hours), some are by composers closely associated with Fiedler (the works of Leroy Anderson), and quite a few were performed here at the Hatch Shell as early as the first season in 1929 (selections from Show Boat).

On a final note, Boston Landmarks Orchestra is especially proud of and grateful to the Vice Chair of our Board of Trustees, Arthur Fiedler’s son Peter Fiedler, for supporting our work and believing in us.

Thank you all for joining us this evening, and thank you for supporting our free concerts. We hope to see you every Wednesday night!

Sincerely,

Jo Frances Meyer
Executive Director
Boston Landmarks Orchestra

VIOLIN I
Gregory Vitale, concertmaster
Christine Vitale
Pattison Story
Tera Gorsett Keck
Colin Davis
Heidi Braun-Hill
Lisa Brooke
Olga Kouznetsova

VIOLIN II
Paula Oakes, principal
Rose Drucker
Maynard Goldman
Robert Curtis
Stacy Alden
Young-Shin Choi

VIOLA
Kenneth Stalberg, principal
Abigail Cross
Donna Jerome
Jean Haig
Don Krishnaswami
Noriko Futagami
Ashleigh Gordon

CELLO
Aron Zelkowicz, principal
Melanie Dyball
Jolene Kessler
Patrick Owen
Kevin Crudder

BASS
Robert Lynam, principal
Barry Boettger
Kevin Green
John Shiu

FLUTE
Lisa Hennessey, principal
Ann Bobo

PICCOLO
Ann Bobo

OBOE
Andrew Price, principal
Lynda Jacquin

ENGLISH HORN
Lynda Jacquin

CLARINET
Rane Moore, principal
Margo McGowan
Ryan Yuré

BASS CLARINET
Ryan Yuré

BASSOON
Naho Zhu, principal
Sally Merriman

HORN
Kevin Owen, principal
Jane Sebring
Whitacre Hill
Nancy Hudgins

TRUMPET
Dana Oakes, principal
Jesse Levine
Greg Whitaker

TROMBONE
Robert Couture, principal
Brian Diehl
Peter Cirelli

TROMBONE
Donald Rankin, principal

TIMPANI
Jeffrey Fischer, principal

PERCUSSION
Robert Schulz, principal
Craig McNutt

HARP
Ina Zdorovetchi

American Sign Language (ASL) Team
Shana Gibbs, coach
Adrianna Neefus
Christopher Robinson
Erin Sanders-Sigmon

Maynard Goldman, Personnel Manager

Ashton Bush, Librarian
Boston Landmarks One City Choir

**SOPRANO**
Cheryl Anderson (Somerville)
Marilyn Andry (Boston)
Audrey A. Balan (Brockton)
Elizabeth Bell (Somerville)
Lisa Bello (Needham)
Ellen Bosch (Boston)
Alverga Buchanan (Boston)
Mariaelena Caboni (Boston)
Yoshi Campbell (Gloucester) *
Jan Carpman (Brookline)
Dolores Carter (Randolph)
Michelle Cherry (Brighton)
Alexandria Cobb (Roxbury Crossing)
Maru Colbert (Swampscott)
Bianca D’Antonio (Natick)
Victoria Dandridge (Boston)
Ana Cristina Deschamps (Medford)
Heather Fernald (Acton)
Claire Folini (Westfield)
Carol Frantz (Cambridge)
Diane Garner (Cambridge)
Beth Goldman Galer (North Easton)
Sarah Gosselin (Boston)
Kristin Griffin (Cambridge)
Debra Hall (Newton)
Wendy E. Heckman (Salem, NH) *
Kathryn Hess (Cambridge)
Kai-Yin Hsu (Lexington)
Mimi Huntington (Cambridge)
Abigail Jackson (Boston)
Zaida C. Lambe (Newton)
Kate Leavey (Natick)
Kate Lebeaux (Natick) *
San San Lee (Newton)
Jean MacGowan (West Roxbury)
Beth Mosier (Reading)
Tammy Ngai (Brookline) *
Lauren Olson-Sidford (Newburyport)
Elizabeth R. Poland (Andover)
Surya Reis (Boston)
Andrea Ross (Weymouth)
Sarah Rossi (Cambridge)
Carolyn Saxon (Dorchester)
Peg Schadelbauer (Waltham)
Barbara Shimkas Bennett (Reading)
Toyin Shonukan (Somerville)
Amanda Simeone (East Boston)
Julie Ann Starr (Brookline)
Sheryl Stockless (Framingham)
Maria Termini (Roslindale)
Marie Gladys Toussaint (Brockton)
Kathryn Wang (Cambridge)
Brittany Wells (Dorchester)
Natasha Williams (Quincy)
Wenqiong Xue (Medfield)
Chen Yan (Ayer)

**ALTO**
Pamela J. Aldred (Billerica)
Rose Antoinette Brayboy (Roxbury)
Deanna M. Biddy (Boston) *
Susan Burnett-Halling (Wenham)
Liz Carver (Roslindale) *
Rita Corey (Sharon) *
Joanne Crowell (Concord)
Judith Dortz (Cambridge)
Alison Duncan (Boston) *
Margaret Evans (Brookline)
Lilian Fernandes (Waltham)
Linda Frayling (South End)
Katya Gavrish (Natick)
Madeleine Gibbons (Medford) *
Mary Glenn (Jamaica Plain)
Nadja B. Gould (Watertown)
Kellie Gutman (West Roxbury)
Catherine Haines (Somerville)
Sophia Halling (Wenham)
Karen Hawthorne (Medford)
Marjorie Hilton (Cambridge)
Janet Hobbs (Cambridge)
Alison G. Howe (Somerville) *
Sonya Huang (Somerville)
Marie Huhta (Boston)
Gail Ide (Boston)
Jane Jackson (Boston)
Molly Lanzarotta (Hyde Park)
Joanne LaPlant (Allston)
Angel Long (Revere)
Kayla Marcinczyk (Boston)
Judy Margo (Boston)
Susan Maxwell (Needham)
Jeb Mays (Cambridge) *
Nancye Mims (Brookline)
Anne Moore (Dorchester) *
Monica Moore (West Roxbury)
Kelsey Nagel (Cambridge) *
Judith Nelson Dilday (Boston)
Lauren Nelson (Boston)
Angela Noelle Martin (Reading)
Susie Petrov (Lynn) *
Vivian Phelan (Brighton)
Betsy Pollock (Brookline)
Susy Reed (Bedford)
Abby Russell Prior (Concord)
Sandy Sachs (Jamaica Plain)
Tammy Sadok (Needham)
Mary Shetterly (Cambridge)
Holly Steele Lyne (Newton)
Pat Temple (Newburyport)
Ashley Villard (Mattapan)
Jeanne Walsh (Brighton)
Mary Weinstein (Hopkinton)
Cynthia Welch-Moriarty (Amherst)
Natasha Westland (Carlisle)
Linda Wheeler (Roxbury)
Deborah Wolozin (Sudbury)
Susan Worst (Brookline)
Jessica Yang (Cambridge)
Vivian Yu (Jamaica Plain) *
Tricia Zuttermeister (Roslindale)

TENOR
Michael Andree (Weston) *
Laurie Arnone (Roslindale)
Thomas Barber (South Boston)
Erica Barrett Kenny (Cambridge)
Donna M. Bayne (Revere)
Howard Bernstein (Cambridge)
Lena Denis (Somerville)
Jeffrey Dietz (Reading)
Willis Emmons (Cambridge) *
Mark Franklin (Cambridge)
Paul Garver (Acton)
David Hunt (Nahant) *
Carol Kountz (Jamaica Plain)
Derrick Landano (Concord, NH)
Becky Leifer (Malden)
Kebang Lin (Framingham)
Justin Mazzola Paluska (Cambridge)
Tom Regan (Brighton) *

Timothy Rodriguez (Brookline)
Zachary Wasserman (Worcester) *
Thomas Yan (Lexington)

BASS
John G. Andrews (Roslindale) *
David Arnold (Boston)
Robert L. Brayboy III (Hyde Park)
John C. Brown (Brighton) *
Edward Cheesman (Lunenburg)
James Fleming (Arlington)
Bob Goldsmith (Carlisle)
Mike Halling (Wenham)
David Hammond (Malden)
Chip Huhta (Boston)
Roger Ide (Boston)
Adam Jaffe (Boston)
Sean Jones (Medford) *
Tyson Kamikawa (Winchester)
Chuck Kluga (Chelmsford)
Milton L. Wright (Hyde Park)
Jim Lawton (Brookline)
Steve Leavey (Natick)
Taras Leschishin (Roslindale) *
Brian McGovern (North Dartmouth)
Douglas Miller (Boston)
Thomas Morris (Jamaica Plain)
Noel Reid (Malden) *
David Rockwell (Newton)
Thomas R. Rowen (Peabody)
Jacob Sagrans (Weston) *
Sean Shen (Methuen)
Tim Smith (Hyde Park)
Walter Stone (Beverly) *
Jonathan Temple (Newburyport)
Jim Tice (Malden) *
Bradley Turner (Dorchester)
David Van Stone (Boston) *
Steve Vorenberg (Boston) *

*Member of Coro Allegro
Thank you, Boston Landmarks Orchestra, for continuing to enrich the public with musical experiences.

Your dedication to serving our community means so much.

Your Friends & Family at

Encore
BOSTON HARBOR
The **BOSTON LANDMARKS ORCHESTRA** performs free outdoor concerts in
Boston throughout the summer, delighting thousands on a weekly basis. The
Orchestra—made up of some of Boston’s most accomplished professional
musicians—uses great symphonic music as a means of gathering together people
of all backgrounds and ages in joyful collaboration. It regularly collaborates with a
range of cultural and social service organizations to ensure participation across
ethic, economic, and cultural divides. The Orchestra is committed to **BREAKING
DOWN BARRIERS** to access for people with disabilities. It offers braille, large-
print, and text-to-speech programs, assisted listening devices, and ambassadors
to greet and assist audience members. It works with American Sign Language
interpreters as performers at select concerts.

**CHRISTOPHER WILKINS** was appointed Music Director of the Boston
Landmarks Orchestra in 2011. Since then he has reaffirmed founder Charles
Ansbacher’s vision of making great music accessible to the whole community,
emphasizing inclusive programming and collaborative work. Mr. Wilkins also
serves as Music Director of the Akron Symphony. As guest conductor, he has
appeared with many of the leading orchestras of the U.S. and abroad. Previously
he served as Music Director of the San Antonio Symphony and the Colorado
Springs Symphony. Born in Boston, he earned his bachelor’s degree from Harvard
in 1978 and his master’s from the Yale School of Music in 1981. As an oboist, he
performed with many Boston area ensembles including the Tanglewood Music
Center, and the Boston Philharmonic under Benjamin Zander.

**BOSTON LANDMARKS ONE CITY CHOIR** is inspired by the vision of
activist Hubie Jones, who once said that Boston can be “one city through art and
culture.” The Boston Landmarks Orchestra has set a goal of including in the choir
singers from all of Boston’s neighborhoods and many surrounding communities.
The choir first appeared on opening night of the orchestra’s 2012 season.

**DAVID F. COLEMAN** has a Bachelor’s degree in Piano Performance &
Composition from Boston University and a Master’s degree in Composition from
Tufts University. He serves as Director of Choral Music at the Dana Hall School in
Wellesley, Minister of Music at Greater Framingham Community Church, and
Director of the 225-voice Tufts University Gospel Choir. He has also served
as Music Director for American Repertory Theater, SpeakEasy Stage Company,
and Company One Theater. He has performed at the White House, the Vatican,
Carnegie Hall, Symphony Hall, the House of Blues, the Wang Center, and Fenway
Park and was featured in BBC World News America’s “First Person”
series. Coleman was the 2007 recipient of the Thomas Dorsey Award from New
England Conservatory and the 2013 recipient of two New England Urban Music
Awards. He was also a 2016 TEDx Natick speaker. He has worked with Ryan
Gosling, Audra McDonald, Patti Labelle, Bobby McFerrin, and Phish.

**CORO ALLEGRO** is proud to be Boston's award-winning LGBTQ+ and
allied classical choir. Under the leadership of Artistic Director David Hodgkins,
Coro Allegro is known for critically acclaimed programming, performances, and
recordings of works by diverse classical and contemporary composers.
Through its performances, collaborations, and community partnerships, Coro
Allegro strengthens community, builds bridges, and enriches lives in the Greater
Boston area and beyond. Coro Allegro is dedicated to providing access to choral
music to broad audiences, performing works by diverse composers, and serving
as a model LGBTQ+ organization through artistic excellence and visibility. In 2019,
Coro Allegro was named a winner of the Chorus America/ASCAP Award for
Adventurous Programming. This prestigious award recognizes Coro’s commitment
to fostering and promoting new music. Since its founding in 1991, Coro Allegro has performed 22 world premieres, including 13 commissions, and earned praise from Gramophone magazine for introducing “meaningful additions to the choral repertoire.”

DAVID HODGKINS has delighted audiences in the greater Boston area with “creative programs, sung with enthusiasm and tonal beauty” (Ed Tapper, Bay Windows). Mr. Hodgkins is the Artistic Director of Coro Allegro in Boston, which Boston Globe critic Michael Manning deemed “one of Boston’s most accomplished choruses,” Artistic Director of The New England Classical Singers in Andover, Director of Music at The Commonwealth School in Boston, Advanced Conducting instructor at the Kodály Music Institute, and serves on the advisory boards of The Boston City Singers and the UMass/Amherst Music Department. Mr. Hodgkins has performed with Coro Allegro at the Chorus America, ACDA, and GALA conferences, and has made numerous appearances as guest conductor and clinician. His ensembles have collaborated with the Boston Celebrity Series, Boston Cecilia, Handel and Haydn Society, Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, the Terezin Music Foundation, and the Boston Landmarks Orchestra. Mr. Hodgkins has conducted over 23 world and Boston premiere performances. With Coro Allegro he has received the Chorus America 2019 ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award, the 2012 Chorus America Alice Parker/ASCAP Award for their collaborative premiere performance of Kareem Roustom’s oratorio Son of Man, and released the critically acclaimed CDs Awakenings and In Paradisum on the Navona label. Gramophone magazine noted of Awakenings that “Coro Allegro, led by David Hodgkins, performs each score with fine balance and interplay.” David Hodgkins received his Bachelor of Music from UMass/Amherst, a Masters in Choral Conducting from Temple University, and fellowships in choral and orchestral conducting at the Aspen and Sandpoint music festivals.

Soprano SIRGOURNEY COOK is a professional opera singer and educator from Chicago, Illinois. She completed her graduate education at Longy School of Music of Bard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts in May 2016, where she studied with the late baritone Robert Honeysucker and was named a Presidential Scholar. Prior to her education at Longy, she toured as the soprano background vocalist for Oscar and Grammy Award Winning Actress and Recording Artist Jennifer Hudson for over three years, singing on national and international stages such as President Barack Obama’s 50th Birthday Celebration and Second Campaign Party, the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Oslo, Norway and most recently The Grammy Academy’s 2019 Tribute to Aretha Franklin. Ms. Cook was featured as a soloist in Duke Ellington’s “Concerts of Sacred Music” conducted by Ellington’s protégé, Maestro Randall Keith Horton and at Boston University’s 2017 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Commemoration. Most recently, she performed as a handmaid in Boston Lyric Opera’s 2019 production of Poul Ruders’ The Handmaid’s Tale. As an opera singer and teacher, Ms. Cook continues to use music as an avenue to inspire, educate, and advocate for underprivileged youth.

A born and raised Bostonian, soprano JENNIFER ELLIS is a familiar face and voice to New England audiences. Favorite credits include: Huntington Theatre Company’s critically acclaimed production of Merrily We Roll Along, Shear Madness at New World Stages (NYC) and The Charles Playhouse (Boston) and My Fair Lady at The Lyric Stage Company. Ms. Ellis is a four-time winner of the IRNE Award and was awarded the Elliot Norton Award for her work in My Fair Lady and Wonderful Town. She recently reprised the role of Francesca in The
Bridges of Madison County at American Theater Group, a role for which she received much acclaim in 2017 at SpeakEasy Stage. Ms. Ellis recently fulfilled a lifelong dream of being in a Christmas movie—*A Sweet Romance* will be available to stream this holiday season. In Boston she has performed on nearly every stage in town, including her personal favorites, Fenway Park and the Hatch Memorial Shell with Landmarks Orchestra.

Soprano **CAROLYN SAXON** has performed in stage productions in Boston and beyond. Her Boston theatre performances have included roles in *black odyssey boston* (Central Square Theatre), *1776* – (New Repertory Theatre), *Ragtime* (Wheelock Family Theater), *The Wiz* (Lyric Stage Company), *Shakespeare in Love, Violet, The Color Purple, In the Heights, Far From Heaven* (SpeakEasy Stage), and *Brother Nat* (Emerson Paramount Center). Regionally, she has appeared with the North Shore Music Theatre, Connecticut Repertory, Papermill Playhouse NJ, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Weston Playhouse, Forestburgh Playhouse, Studio Arena Theatre, Artpark, MusicalFare, and Struthers Library Theatre. Her Broadway, New York Theatre, and national tour performances include roles in *The Civil War, Bring In Da Noise, Bring In Da Funk, Hair, Purlie, Can-Can, Linda Eder: The Christmas Concert,* and *NYIFF*. Her film work includes *Sweet & Lowdown, Small Time Crooks,* and *Curse of the Jade Scorpion*. Ms. Saxon has also sung at Carnegie Hall and Teatro Colón, and with the Boston Pops Gospel Choir as the featured soloist, as well as with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Indianapolis Symphony, Sharing a New Song, NEC Millennium Choir, and Boston Community Choir.

A Chicago native, **MYRAN PARKER-BRASS** is a professional musician, educator, and administrator committed to providing access to quality arts and arts education. Ms. Parker-Brass recently retired as Executive Director for the Arts for the Boston Public Schools, where she developed a national model for building and deepening arts education for urban school districts. Before joining BPS, she was Director of Education for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, where in her twenty-year tenure she developed model programs to support music education for all Massachusetts communities. Moving comfortably between classical, jazz and gospel genres, her performance career has included concerts across the US, Europe, and South America. Ms. Parker-Brass has appeared as a soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra and Boston Landmarks Orchestra, and her jazz performances earned her the "Outstanding Jazz Vocalist" award at the Notre Dame Jazz Festival. Ms. Parker-Brass, a co-founder of the New England Spiritual Ensemble, is dedicated to the performance and preservation of the Negro spiritual.

Hailed by *Opera News* for the “richness and pliability of his [voice],” American countertenor **TAI ONEY** has been a prizewinner in several competitions, including claiming a prestigious Sullivan Foundation Award and a Fulbright Award. He was a Finalist in the Cesti Singing Competition, Semi-Finalist in the Palm Beach Opera Competition, and a second place Regional Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Tai has been on the roster with companies and festivals such as the London Handel Festival; Innsbruck Festival of Early Music; Finnish National Opera; Brisbane Baroque; Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; Royal Opera House; The Dallas Opera; Birmingham Opera Company; San Diego Opera; English Touring Opera; Opera Parallèle; Deutsche Oper Berlin; and Festival d’Aix-en-Provence. He holds degrees from Stetson University (BME), Boston University (MMus), the New England Conservatory of Music (GDip), the Royal College of Music International Opera School (ArtDip), and is currently working towards a doctoral degree in Music Education at Boston University.

Tenor **JONAS BUDRIS** is a versatile soloist and ensemble musician,
engaging in new works and early music with equal passion. Mr. Budris enjoys performing, touring, and recording with such groups as the Handel and Haydn Society, Emmanuel Music, Boston Baroque, Pegasus Early Music, and Cut Circle. He is featured in Blue Heron's album "Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, Vol. 5" which received the 2018 Gramophone Award for Early Music. On the opera stage, he has performed principal and supporting roles with numerous musical organizations, including Opera Boston, OperaHub, Guerilla Opera, and Odyssey Opera, originating such roles as John in Giver of Light and the title role of Chrononhotonthologos. Mr. Budris recently made his debut at the Carmel Bach Festival, where he was the 2018 Tenor Vocal Fellow for the Virginia Best Adams Vocal Masterclass. Originally from Martha’s Vineyard, Mr. Budris holds a degree in Environmental Sciences & Engineering from Harvard College.

Described as “brilliant” by Opera News, tenor MATTHEW DIBATTISTA is continually in demand on some of the world’s most prestigious stages, having performed opera and concert works throughout the United States and Europe. He has sung with such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Seiji Ozawa, Keith Lockhart, Sir Andrew Davis and Andris Nelsons. Known for an exceptionally varied repertoire, Mr. DiBattista has performed over sixty different roles to date, spanning the entire operatic repertoire. He has been on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera and has performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Glimmerglass Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Cincinnati May Festival, Florida Grand Opera, New Orleans Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Omaha, Tulsa Opera, Opera Boston, Virginia Opera, Opera Colorado, Tanglewood Music Center, Long Beach Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Minnesota Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theatre, Boston Lyric Opera, Dayton Philharmonic, and Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, and has appeared for eight out of nine straight seasons as principle artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Mr. DiBattista can also be heard as soloist in Ned Rorem’s Our Town (New World Records) and as the title role in Kamran Ince’s Judgment of Midas (Albany Records). He will make his debut with San Francisco Opera this Fall in a production of The Handmaid’s Tale.

DAVRON S. MONROE is excited to be back with Boston Landmarks Orchestra, following his role as tenor soloist in Lost in the Stars, part of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a Dream” speech. Mr. Monroe is a Boston-area singer and actor and has performed with such companies as Lyric Stage Company of Boston, SpeakEasy Stage, New Repertory Theatre, Moonbox Productions, The Company Theatre, Wheelock Family Theatre, and The Front Porch Arts Collective. He is the recipient of the 2019 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Musical Performance, Actor, for his role in Breath & Imagination: The story of Roland Hayes, about the acclaimed African-American classical concert soloist. Mr. Monroe is also the recipient of the Bob Jolly Award and is an IRNE nominee.

Bass-Baritone ALVY POWELL, one of the world’s best-known interpreters of the role of Porgy from Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess, has won acclaim for his performances at La Scala, New York City Opera Live at Lincoln Center PBS, San Francisco Opera, Cape Town Opera, and Sydney Opera, to name a few. In 1996 Mr. Powell was nominated for a NAACP Image Award for his portrayal of Porgy, a role he has performed worldwide. He has appeared as Bartolo in Le Nozze di Figaro with the Virginia Opera, Sharpless in Madama Butterfly with the Connecticut Opera, Colline in La Bohème with the Tulsa Opera and Opera Pacific, and Timur in Turandot with Opera Carolina, Opera Grand Rapids and the Cleveland Opera. Mr. Powell made his film debut as Balthazar in the BBC’s
production of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in June 2008 singing the role of Joe in the concert production of *Show Boat*. He was bass soloist in the Verdi Requiem with the Rome Opera commemorating the Centennial of the death of Giuseppe Verdi, sponsored by the Vatican. His vast oratorio repertoire includes Handel’s *Messiah*, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Rossini’s *Stabat Mater*, and Brahms’s *Requiem*. Combining his military career with his independent vocal performances, Master Sergeant Alvy Powell is also a soloist with the United States Army Chorus. He has sung at the White House on several occasions, including at the Inauguration of former President George Herbert Walker Bush, and, as a favorite of the Ford Family, at the funerals of former President Gerald R. Ford and First Lady Betty Ford. In December 2018 he was the soloist for the private internment of Pres. H. W. Bush.

**MILTON WRIGHT**, bass, studied with Donna Roll of the Longy School of Music and has been a longtime member of the New England Spiritual Ensemble. He has appeared in several Revels productions, most notably as Frederick Douglass in “There’s A Meeting Here Tonight,” and for over twenty years he has appeared in the National Center of Afro-American Artists production of Langston Hughes’s *Black Nativity*, in addition to serving as its musical director. He is also a songwriter, composer, and playwright. Now enjoying retirement, the Hon. Milton L. Wright formerly served as an Associate Justice of the Roxbury Division of the Boston Municipal Court. His first full-length musical, *Jobe*, is a retelling of the biblical Book of Job.

Award-winning American composer **FRED ONOVWEROSUOKE** has had a wide-ranging career with works featured in a variety of recordings, films, documentaries and radio, including Robert DeNiro’s film *The Good Shepherd*, Niyi Coker’s film *Pennies for the Boatman*, IMI Chamber Players’ CD *Dances & Rhapsodies: Works for Wind Quintet*, William-Chapman Nyaho’s CD ASA, Hymes/Hollister’s CD *African Art Music for Flute*, Peter Henderson’s CD *A Celebration of African Composers for Piano*, and Rebeca Omordia’s CD *Ekele*, to mention just a few. His book *Twenty-four Studies in African Rhythms* (AM Publishers) is acclaimed as one of the most-demanded African-rhythm influenced piano studies known. His choral series, *Songs of Africa: 22 Pieces for Mixed Voices* (Oxford University Press) and *Twelve African Songs for Solo Voice & Piano* (AM Publishers), have become favorites among music professionals across the United States and globally. Fred Onovwerosuoke is an Artist Fellow of the Regional Arts Commission, and serves as resident-composer for the Intercultural Music Initiative.

**PODIUM NOTE**

“Deep River” is an essential American anthem. It is a sacred folk song born of slavery—as all Negro spirituals are—yet it speaks of hope, freedom, peace, and belonging. In the song’s lyric, the words “deep river” function as neither subject nor object, but as an all-pervading symbol of the transience of this world, and the promise of deliverance to the next.

*Deep river,*  
*My home is over Jordan.*  
*Deep river, Lord.*  
*I want to cross over into campground.*
Oh, don’t you want to go
To the Gospel feast;
That Promised Land,
Where all is peace?

Oh, deep river, Lord,
I want to cross over into campground.

We can’t identify individual authors of “Deep River,” but we do know it was by and for African Americans. Many of the past century’s greatest African-American singers have featured it prominently on their programs, including Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, and William Warfield. Marian Anderson sang it on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 at Eleanor Roosevelt’s invitation, after the Daughters of the American Revolution denied her permission to perform in Constitution Hall because of her race.

The association of this song with black voices is written into history. Yet people of all backgrounds are profoundly moved by it. Langston Hughes, in his most famous poem, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” alludes to “Deep River,” not only in reference to his own ancestry but also to the human race:

I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers…

Anyone who doubts whether non-black singers should perform “Deep River” ought to listen to a performance by Bostonian Lorraine Hunt Lieberson. She sang it often as an encore on her recitals, including at the Ravinia Festival in August of 2004, a recording of which is available on compact disc. Her voice reveals the intertwining of love and grief that lies at the heart of the genre. She brings an ecstatic sadness to the peak of the music at “promis’d land,” and sings with an easy American inflection that gives the impression she is completely at home.

A song with such universal resonance is ideal for the Landmarks Orchestra’s One City Choir, this year under the direction of the multi-talented David F. Coleman. “Deep River” also makes a fitting centerpiece in a program uniting several Boston performing arts institutions, each with a mission to advocate for diverse voices in our city. We are excited to welcome Coro Allegro tonight. It is not the first time that “Boston’s LGBTQ+ and allied classical chorus” has performed with the Landmarks Orchestra, but it is the first time that their Artistic Director David Hodgkins has conducted our combined forces. We are also proud to welcome singers of the New England Spiritual Ensemble, in a return visit to our stage, as well as members of Boston’s esteemed annual production of Langston Hughes’s Black Nativity.

Langston Hughes, the poet, and William Grant Still, the composer, were major figures of the Harlem Renaissance, that New York-based flowering of African-American expression that flourished from the end of the First World War through the mid-1930s. Hughes inspired several aspects of tonight’s program. His poem “As I Get Older” was the second of three poems set by
composer Fred Onovwerosuoke in his *A Triptych of American Voices: A Cantata of the People*, commissioned by Coro Allegro and premiered in April of this year. The last movement of the *Triptych* concludes the first half of this concert.

It’s hard to think of a composer more versatile than William Grant Still. He wrote prolifically for radio, film, theater, opera, and the concert stage, in styles ranging from the avant-garde to jazz. After attending Oberlin College and New England Conservatory—where he studied violin and composition—he moved to New York, and began arranging for such marquee names as Artie Shaw and W. C. Handy. Still played not violin but oboe in the pit orchestra for Eubie Blake’s historic black-cast musical *Shuffle Along*, which launched several important acting careers, including that of Paul Robeson. He was a precocious learner, and counted among his mentors both the traditionalist Arthur Chadwick and the experimentalist Edgard Varèse.

*Festive Overture* is a wartime piece. It won first prize—a $1000 war bond—in a contest sponsored by Eugene Goosens and the Cincinnati Symphony, the same team that commissioned Aaron Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man* two years earlier. Still’s work is built using traditional European architecture with mid-century American features: a sonata form structure and a neo-romantic quasi-Hollywood style, with extended harmonies redolent of jazz.

The overture begins with a brass fanfare using a pentatonic (five-note) scale rather than the “Western” diatonic (seven-note) scale. The pentatonic scale is the basis of many, perhaps most, musical traditions around the world, including West African and Afro-Caribbean music. The fanfare idea turns out to be a skeletal version of the overture’s good-natured main theme, which appears in the violins moments later. Muted trumpets add a martial character before a second subject introduces an easy-flowing, expressive idea. We have now heard all the basic thematic elements of the work. Constant variation and manipulation of these ideas fill out the eight-minute score.

Arthur Fiedler loved to program this kind of music: light and sophisticated, neither popular nor classical but somewhere in between. It is a type of work that no longer has a place in most orchestral programs. The *Festive Overture* is so spirited and so skillfully orchestrated that one wonders if it would be more celebrated if its composer were known to have been Aaron Copland instead. Or, given historical inequities, if its author simply had been white.

A feeling of love and loss pervades George Walker’s *Lyric for Strings*, whose original title was *Lament*. It originated as the slow movement of his String Quartet No. 1, which was dedicated to the memory of his grandmother. Walker completed the work shortly after he graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, becoming the school’s first African-American alumnus. Fifty years later, he won the 1996 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his *Lilacs* for voice and orchestra, premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The *Lyric for Strings* has often been compared to another work for strings alone by a Curtis graduate, Samuel Barber’s *Adagio for Strings* (which the Landmarks Orchestra performs on August 14 in a collaboration with the New England Aquarium). In mood there is a similarity, but in texture and design they are very different. Barber’s *Adagio* is an extended canon, with each voice
echoing the others in slow-building counterpoint. Walker's six-minute *Lyric* is built in three arches of equal length. Within each arch, separate voices intertwine in upward scales, rising and then bending back on themselves, as if yearning for something not quite attainable. Three times the sound accumulates; three times the music recedes, relaxing into gently repeating chords of consonance and stillness.

We collaborate with two remarkable singers tonight, Alvy Powell and Sirgourney Cook, in our performance of four solo spirituals, three of them arranged by composer-pianist Margaret Bonds. The spirituals first came to light after the Civil War when the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University travelled the world—from Oberlin College to Buckingham Palace—performing selections from this trove of sacred songs in order to raise money for their newly founded university. The recontextualizing of these songs from their original settings of communal worship to formal concert performances would certainly have surprised their anonymous authors. The two musicians most responsible for initiating this tradition were former Fisk Jubilee Singer Roland Hayes—longtime resident of Brookline, MA—and his Boston-trained pianist Lawrence Brown. This past season, Davron S. Monroe, featured soloist in two spirituals settings tonight, played the role of Roland Hayes in *Breath and Imagination*, a production of Front Porch Arts Collective and the Lyric Stage Company of Boston, in collaboration with Ashleigh Gordon and *Castle of our Skins*.

“Didn’t my Lord Deliver Daniel,” in this setting by Lawrence Brown, was a favorite of Roland Hayes. Like most Negro spirituals, the text is taken not from the New Testament but from the Old Testament. Its message is multi-layered: on the one hand, it affirms the promise of divine deliverance for the faithful; on the other, it offers a vision of escape from captivity:

*I see my foot on de Gospel ship*
*An’ de ship begin to sail*
*It landed me over on Canaan’s shore*
*An’ I’ll never come back no mo’.*

“Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho” refers to another figure in the Hebrew bible who fought a divinely inspired battle for freedom. The song sometimes employs dialect—such as substituting “fit” for “fought”—in words that can be taken both in their biblical sense and as an optimistic vision of freedom. There is a giddy bounce in the rhythm and an entertaining final falling gesture as the “walls come tumblin’ down.” “[I Got a Home in that Rock](https://www.africanamericanheritage.com/songs/i-got-a-home-in-that-rock)” foretells of the salvation awaiting the faithful in heaven. The text invokes the Gospel of Luke to demonstrate the exalting of the humble (Lazarus) and the humbling of the exalted (Dives, the “rich man”):

*Well-a poor Lazarus poor as I*
*When he died he had a home on high*
*He had a home in that rock don’t you see?*

*The rich man died and lived so well*
*When he died he had a home in Hell*
*He had no home in that rock, well, don’t you see?*
“He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand”—like “Amazing Grace”—is almost certainly not a Negro spiritual, though many Americans assume it is. Its origins are unclear, but it was collected by Frank and Anne Warner, who travelled throughout rural parts of the eastern United States recording and transcribing folk material. The song rejoices in the Lord as creator and sustainer of all things, as in Psalm 95: “In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.”

The themes of hope and salvation contained in the spirituals have influenced composers throughout the world. English composer Michael Tippett drew on the healing power of the spirituals to extraordinary effect in his oratorio A Child of our Time. The harsh nature of Tippett’s subject—an incident leading to the Nazi pogrom of Kristallnacht—is balanced by the deeply consoling tone of the spirituals. They function in much the same way that the Lutheran chorales do in Bach’s Passion settings. Tippett’s arrangement of “Deep River” for soloists and orchestra is the final movement of his oratorio. Our solo quartet includes—in addition to Sirgourney Cook and Davron S. Monroe—two devoted board members of the Boston Landmarks Orchestra, Myran Parker-Brass and Milton Wright, both members of the New England Spiritual Ensemble. Myran has served recently as Executive Director for the Arts of the Boston Public Schools, and Milton currently serves as Music Director of Black Nativity. For our performance of this work, I am delighted to share the podium with the Choirmaster of this year’s One City Choir, David Freeman Coleman.

Among many early twentieth-century composers who incorporated the spirituals into their compositions was the Canadian-born Robert Nathaniel Dett. In 1918, he wrote: “We have this wonderful store of folk music—the melodies of an enslaved people... But this store will be of no value unless we utilize it, unless we treat it in such manner that it can be presented in choral form, in lyric and operatic works, in concertos and suites and salon music—unless our musical architects take the rough timber of Negro themes and fashion from it music which will prove that we, too, have national feelings and characteristics, as have the European peoples whose forms we have zealously followed for so long.”

Dett composed The Chariot Jubilee while in residence at Harvard; the premiere performance was in Boston in 1921. He originally wrote it for tenor, chorus, and organ. Hale Smith’s orchestration was commissioned on behalf of the Atlanta Symphony by Benjamin Roe, who served for a number of years as a board member of the Landmarks Orchestra. The opening bars of The Chariot Jubilee pay tribute to the chords heard at the beginning of the Largo of Dvořák’s New World Symphony. Dvořák had famously urged Americans to use the spirituals as a resource to create an authentic American musical style. The work is a felicitous hybrid of arranged spiritual and European-style anthem. Davron S. Monroe is our tenor soloist. The biblically inspired text is Dett’s own:

Tenor: Down from the heavens, a golden chariot is swinging ... Comes God’s promise of salvation Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.

Chorus: God made a covenant, for the glory of His grace,
Thru our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; …
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.

Chorus: God made a covenant, for the glory of His grace,
Thru our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ;
His gospel flowing free, like a chariot swung from heaven,
Shall bear the true believer home, safely home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Sweet cov’nant of salvation,
Swing low, O swing low!

Chorus: Salvation, sweet cov’nant of our Lord,
I shall ride up in the chariot in that morning! (repeat)

Tenor: He who doth on Christ believe (Chorus: Swing low, sweet chariot!)
Tho' he were dead, yet shall he live. (Sweet chariot, swing low!)
King Jesus triumphed o'er the grave, (Swing low, sweet chariot!)
His grace alone can sinners save! (Sweet chariot, swing low!
Hallelujah!)

Chorus: Salvation, sweet cov’nant of our Lord,
I shall ride up in the chariot in that morning!
Salvation, sweet cov’nant of our Lord,
Swing low, sweet chariot, Coming for to carry me home,
God made a covenant for the glory of his grace …
O hallelujah!
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home,

Tenor: Swing low, sweet chariot, sweet cov’nant of God’s grace!

Chorus: Coming for to carry me home. O hallelujah!

David F. Coleman offers the following description of the next work, performed by the choir alone, without orchestral accompaniment:

“In the days following the events of 9/11/01, songwriter David Frazier composed “I Need You to Survive,” which was first performed at Radio City Music Hall in early 2002 by gospel recording artist Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Crusade Choir. This song in the contemporary gospel genre is unique in that it is sung completely in unison, and the focus of the text is more for the uplifting of the congregation rather than praising a higher power. At the time, New York City was experiencing a community coming together, putting aside differences, and looking forward. In saying, "Stand with me. Agree with me, we're all a part of God's body," the song sets a tone of inclusivity and genuine desire for human connection. The refrain of “I won't
harm you with words from my mouth" still rings as a call for us today, and a maxim we could use across all areas of our country, government, and abroad. Tonight's concert, "Deep River," follows in step with the themes of "I Need You to Survive"—inclusivity, shared song, shared struggles, shared victories. We would do well to carry on this work long after the concert ends.

**Coro Allegro** performed a concert at Sanders Theatre in March called *America: We Need to Talk*. It featured a choral work by William Grant Still and two works by St. Louis-based composer **Fred Onovwerosuoke**—or FredO as he is universally known—including the world premiere of his *A Triptych of American Voices: A Cantata of the People*, described as a “kaleidoscopic work by an immigrant composer [that] shines light on race relations in America through the prism of three great poems.” Tonight, Coro Allegro’s **Artistic Director David Hodgkins** leads chorus, orchestra, and soloists in the ninth and final movement of that work. The text is from the poem, “**We Need to Talk**,” by Michael Castro (1945-2018), from his collection, *We Need to Talk: Selected and New Poems*, published by the Singing Bone Press.

Our soloists—who sang also at the March premiere—are countertenor **Tai Oney** and tenor **Jonathan Budris**. The composer rearranged the order of some of the poet’s lines. FredO explains what transpired when he played an early version of the work to Michael Castro: “When he heard his poem… he noticed at once how I had ‘re-versed his poem,’ and with a twinkle in his eyes he chuckled: ‘I like how you reversed the poem, and gave it a different kind of energy. I really like it!’”

We need to talk!
I am more than your idea,
I am more than your idea,
I am tangible, touchable,
I am a human being like you.

So get out of your closed mind,
It’s claustrophobic in there -
So get out,
So get out!

More than the weight I bear,
More than the clothes I wear,
More than my gender
Or even sexual union
I’m a human being like you

So get out of your closed mind,
So get out,
So get out!

I am more than my skin tone,
I am even more, more than my hair!
I am tangible, touchable,
a human being like you:
Try to get out!
I say, take off your armor!
Put away your gun!

More than my accented speech...

The god in you honors the god in me
Hello, Namaste,
We need to talk.

We breathe the same air,
We breathe the same air;
We want the same things,
We want the same things.
We need to talk.

We need to talk!

In an interview with Coro Allegro’s Marketing & Audience Development Director, Yoshi Campbell, FredO reflects on the work: “Michael Castro’s poem captures a lot of the things rising in the Ferguson-St. Louis area, things that did not come about overnight, but a frustration that has been brewing for a long time, a community that has been silenced. The entire work is designed as a partnership of voices and musicians sharing aspects of one grand song… At [an informal preview] in Saint Louis, Missouri, as I read aloud the poem’s text rhythmically to the music, Michael’s eyes grew big with excitement. He said afterwards, ‘After all, the way we were protesting in St. Louis [during the Ferguson unrest due to the slaying of Michael Brown], it was not a gentle voice, it was a strong voice, by the people. “GET OUT of your closed mind!” Wake up and address this bigotry, these injustices!’”

Of the commissioning organization, FredO says, “My relationship with Coro Allegro reminds me of what Viola Davis said when accepting her first Oscar: ‘There is no shortage of great black artists. All we need is an opportunity.’ That is what Coro Allegro and David Hodgkins gave me: an opportunity.”

Dr. Todd Decker, author of Who Should Sing Ol’ Man River?: The Lives of an American Popular Song and Show Boat: Performing Race in an American Musical, has served as an advisor to the Boston Landmarks Orchestra this summer during our preparations for this program. He has been enormously generous with his time and extremely helpful in his suggestions. He served as a panelist in our Community Conversation on the portrayal of race in musical theater and on the concert stage on July 23 at WBUR’s CitySpace. We are deeply grateful to Todd. Reverend Emmett G. Price III moderated that Conversation, and contributed much to our understanding of issues surrounding music and race. His wise leadership on a range of issues important to this community is well known, as is his empathic and kindhearted manner. We are fortunate to count Emmett a friend. And we are excited for the new podcast on faith, politics, and culture he publishes, together with Reverend Irene Monroe: “All Rev’d Up.”

Show Boat, which opened on Broadway in 1927, is “perhaps the most successful and influential Broadway musical play ever written,” according to the New Grove Dictionary of Music. Musicologist Geoffrey Block writes that
the work has “long since earned its coveted historical position as the foundation of the modern American musical.” Jerome Kern’s music demonstrated the range of musical styles that could be effective in musical theater, and Oscar Hammerstein II’s book encompassed serious subjects in a way no American musical ever had.

But the most historically significant aspect of the work was the way in which it portrayed race, and made racial identity a central element of the drama. It was the first major musical to present black and white performers side-by-side in the same scene. More than that, Hammerstein’s plot was intended to demonstrate—largely to white audiences—that black artistry lies at the roots of American popular music. While the outline of the story is taken from Edna Ferber’s novel, Show Boat, the treatment of race as a plotline in Show Boat the musical is largely Hammerstein’s.

While Show Boat provided a substantial amount of professional work—welcome employment for the most part—to gifted African-American performers at the time, it also perpetuated hurtful conventions. For years, certain of the black roles were played by white performers in blackface; several of the characters in the show can be seen as representing negative racial stereotypes; and the language of the book and the lyrics has been a constant target of criticism, from the original use of the “n” word to the dialect written for black characters.

Yet, for all of that, Show Boat has been a mainstay on Broadway for ninety-two years. It is the most revived musical of all time, having enjoyed nine New York revivals to date. It has been made into three feature-length films. And because it has been in the repertoire for so long, one can trace the evolution of attitudes about race relations, cultural appropriation, and the black-white color line by examining the history of productions of Show Boat. Decisions that actors and directors have made about casting, staging, character, dialect and lyrics... all of these have changed as societal attitudes about what is acceptable and unacceptable have shifted drastically over time.

Show Boat’s unprecedented success over ninety-two years resulted mainly from the quality and allure of Jerome Kern’s music. The show’s impact on the development of American musical theater comes also from its many dimensions. Show Boat had an ambitious design, striving to be many things at once: a love story (of five different couples); an epic American saga; a tale of prejudice; a vehicle for star performers; a parable demonstrating the centrality of black artistry in American popular music; and a Ziegfeld-style spectacular. It was produced by Florence Ziegfeld Jr., creator of stage spectacles known as the Ziegfeld Follies. These were lavish productions with enormous casts. He personally chose his “Glorified Beauties,” an approach to casting and to displaying the female body in theatrical productions that may not hold up to close scrutiny in today’s climate, to say the least.

Throughout the 2019 season, we feature works championed by Arthur Fiedler, especially works he performed at this venue. Fiedler was always eager to perform a range of repertoire, including new works as well as the tried-and-true. He performed excerpts from Show Boat in his very first season on the Esplanade, on Monday August 5, 1929. Show Boat had opened on
Broadway less than twenty months earlier.

The Rodgers and Hammerstein Concert Library has made available a selection of songs from the original show, which they call *The Show Boat Concert*. It comprises the following movements:

**Overture**
Kern’s orchestra for *Show Boat* is a “classical” orchestra, not yet incorporating saxophones or other instruments more closely allied with jazz orchestras. He quotes five songs from the show in his overture. They are, in order: Mis’ry’s Comin’ Aroun’; Ol’ Man River (abbreviated); Why Do I Love You?; Make Believe; and Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man.

**Cotton Blossom**
As the show boat Cotton Blossom arrives at the river dock in Natchez, Mississippi, sometime in 1887, the townspeople gather along the levee. In the original production, there were two choruses on stage at the outset: a black chorus singing of hardship and inequities (“gettin’ no rest ‘til the Judgement Day”) and a white chorus singing in anticipation of the show (“thrills and laughter, concert after”). In our performance, since the whole purpose of the One City Choir is to present diverse voices in our community, everyone sings everything. As a result, the text has been modified to eliminate racial distinctions that would make no sense. There is a long tradition of altering the text in this way. Changes are sometimes made to accommodate practicalities of staging, but more often to reflect evolving sensibilities around race.

**Where’s the Mate for Me?**
This song introduces the character of the river gambler, Ravenal, and shows him to be good-natured, happy-go-lucky, and rootless. It also displays the voice of the actor playing Ravenal, a lyric tenor in the tradition of operetta. Our soloist is Matthew DiBattista. This is not Matt’s debut with the Landmarks Orchestra; he was tenor soloist when the Orchestra performed in Fenway Park in 2010. As Ravenal is about to finish his line, “I wonder where’s the mate for me,” he turns and sees Magnolia, daughter of the show boat’s captain, Andy Hawks.

**Make Believe**
This duet is an excellent example of how *Show Boat* developed plot lines in its songs rather than in dialogue exclusively, a significant innovation. Ravenal begins. His music is the song’s chorus, a sweetly sentimental tune with wide intervals, not easy to negotiate vocally. When Magnolia enters, she sings more playful music consistent with her role as an ingenue. Performing the part of “Nola” tonight is Jennifer Ellis, a favorite artist who appeared in the Landmarks Orchestra/Commonwealth Shakespeare Company production of *The Boys from Syracuse* in 2016. The idea of pretending to fall in love anticipates another famous Hammerstein flirtation duet by eighteen years: “If I Loved You” from *Carousel*.

**Ol’ Man River**
*Show Boat*’s signature tune is sometimes described as a pseudo-spiritual. Kern intended it as such. He wrote it for one of the great musical stars of the day, Paul Robeson. In fact, Robeson’s singing of the Negro spiritual “Deep
River” served as a model for how Show Boat’s creators hoped Robeson would sound performing the character of Joe. But Robeson turned down the offer to appear in the premiere production, though he changed his mind about Show Boat soon thereafter. It wasn’t long before he was unable to conclude any solo vocal performance until he had satisfied audience demands for “Ol’ Man River.” If the question is, “Who Should Sing ‘Ol’ Man River?’,” tonight we have a definitive answer. Alvy Powell has sung “Ol’ Man River” for the last six US Presidents, going back to Ronald Reagan. His rendition so moved audiences that it led to an invitation to perform at the inauguration of George H. W. Bush, and later at the funerals of both Gerald Ford and George H. W. Bush.

**Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man**

In what Todd Decker calls Hammerstein’s original “popular music plot,” Show Boat was to culminate in a scene featuring Paul Robeson singing spirituals and a pianist named George performing an excerpt from Rhapsody in Blue. The intention was to demonstrate to the (mostly white) audience in the Ziegfeld Theatre on Broadway in 1927 that American popular music has African-American roots. That scene did not survive to opening night. But this song carried that same message. The leading lady of the Cotton Blossom, Julie LaVerne, sings it first, as she expresses to Magnolia her feelings about her husband, Steve. That she knows the song at all comes as a surprise to Joe and his wife, the cook Queenie, because they assume it is a tune that only black folks sing. What the audience doesn’t know yet is that Julie is of mixed race, a fact that, a couple of scenes later, turns the plot in a major way.

In Act II, Magnolia sings “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man” as she has learned it from Julie. Magnolia is now “the white girl with a black voice,” and “cultural appropriation”—as we call it today—has become a central theme of Show Boat.

**Misery Theme**

In his book on Show Boat, Todd Decker writes, “Among the most surprising black-cast numbers made for Show Boat was ‘Mis’ry’s Comin’ Aro’oun’, a lengthy musical sequence without a trace of glorification or minstrelsy in it... just solemn, even funereal singing of a kind white audiences were swooning over at the time.” One stand-out precedent for this number was the so-called “saucer burial scene” from the play Porgy, derived from the same novel by Dubose Heyward that the Gershwin’s later adapted as an opera, Porgy and Bess. In this moment of the play—which opened two months before Show Boat in October, 1927—the music was an improvised spiritual. But “Mis’ry’s Comin’ Aroun’” was deleted before opening night in 1927, and Kern’s musical idea was never fully realized. David F. Coleman explains how he has created this moment for our performance: “The Misery Theme from Show Boat is a choral vocalese featuring a melancholy melody and a sequential harmony with descending bass line reminiscent of Dido’s "Lament" from Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas. Our interpretation of this movement is to present it in the spirit of the Negro spiritual: a soloist—soprano Carolyn Saxon—singing through suffering with an improvised melody and finding hope and eventual encouragement in the support of the voices underneath, in a kind of call and response.”

**You Are Love**

This duet is sung at the boat’s water barrel, an agreed-upon location where
the new lovers, Magnolia and Ravenal, can meet “by chance.” The urgency in their “musical love-making” comes mainly from him. As Todd Decker points out, “Ravenal’s emotions and voice are featured above Magnolia’s. The moment is not shared equally.”

Sports of Gay Chicago
This high-spirited number comes from the extended opening to Act II of *Show Boat*. The scene is the midway at the World’s Fair in Chicago, 1893. Six years have elapsed since the events of Act I. The music suggests a parade, with march rhythms and a variety of sections proceeding in stages.

Why Do I Love You?
One of the instant hits of *Show Boat*, “Why Do I Love You?” comes at the beginning of Act II during the World’s Fair scene. It reflects a relationship brimming with affection, a love which was not to last in that happy state. A relaxed and joyous foxtrot, the song is relatively easy to sing. It was intended to be taken up by amateurs at home, and it most certainly was.

Bill
Another song that *Show Boat* contributed to the American songbook, “Bill” has become a vehicle for a wide variety of female performers who are attracted to its subtle emotional cast. In some ways, it is the antithesis to Julie’s other hit song, “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man.” By now, Julie has lost her man. Her voice reveals an experienced woman who knows heartbreak. Kern’s unusual creation—with lyrics mostly by P. G. Wodehouse rather than Hammerstein—somehow, miraculously, manages to be both comical and desolate.

Ol’ Man River (Reprise)
At the end of our Community Conversation last week, a member of the audience approached me to express a mild regret. During our question and answer period, she missed the opportunity to ask the panel a question: “Did we think that Ol’ Man River—the one who ‘jes’ keeps rollin’ along’—was black or white?” I was amazed by the query, partly because I had never thought of it. Both the tune and the lyric suggest to me a river that is transcendent. But if there is one lesson that our time preparing *Show Boat* has taught us this summer, it’s that there is a great diversity of voices in the human family, and that we are enriched when we make an effort to listen to the whole choir.

“As we continue to engage this journey of life, let us strive to see one another. Not merely with our eyes, but with our hearts. Let us see the best in one another, and not simply the worst. Let us see the potential in one another, and not merely misperceptions. Let us see a bright future for one another. Let us see each other for who we are becoming. When I see you, let the smile in my heart be a reflection of the smile on your face when you see me.”

Reverend Emmett Price III
from the podcast *All Rev’d Up*
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A Veteran's Day Concert Honoring the Service of All
Sunday, November 10, 2019 • 3pm

FLORENCE PRICE, Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight
MELISSA DUNPHY, What do you think I fought for at Omaha Beach?
CRAIG CARNAHAN, Armistice 1918 (Everyone Sang)

SHOFAR: IN MEMORIAM
Guest Artists: New England Classical Singers
Sunday, March 8, 2020 • 3pm

ROBERT STERN, Shofar
Teresa Wakim, soprano • Jonas Budris, tenor
Aaron Engebreth, bass • David Kravitz, bass
RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, Five Mystical Songs
Ron Williams, baritone
JOHANNES BRAHMS, Nannie, Opus 82

In memory of Robert Stern, Sanford Sylvan, and Don Wilkinson

LETTERS TO OUR CHILDREN
Voices across generations for LGBTQ+ youth
Sunday, May 17, 2020 • 3pm

ANDREA CLEARFIELD, A world premiere work on letters by Mimi Lemay to her transgender son and Sam Brinton to their younger self facing conversion therapy
RONALD PERERA, When Music Sounds
OLA GJELLO, Dark Night of the Soul, Luminous Night of the Soul

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August 14, 2019
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If it is raining on the 14th, the concert will be postponed to the 15th at the Hatch Shell or First Church, Cambridge.

August 21, 2019
LANDMARKS DANCE NIGHT
If it is raining on the 21st, the concert will be postponed to the 22nd at the Hatch Shell or an indoor location TBD.

If inclement weather is in the forecast on the day of a concert, please check www.landmarks.org or call 617-987-2000 after 4 PM for any changes to the date or venue. Download or mobile app to receive weather alerts, notifications, and special offers.

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