



The Music Department and
the Office of Special Programs Present

Ensemble Connect

A program of Carnegie Hall,
The Juilliard School,
and the Weill Music Institute,
in partnership with the New York City
Department of Education.

Friday, February 13th, 2026, 7:30PM
Arthur Zankel Music Center
Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall

*The spring residency is made possible by the generous support of
the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation.*

GEORGE LEWIS
(b. 1952)

Broke (2026) commissioned by Carnegie Hall
(World Premiere)

Cameron Cullen, Flute
Nicole Martin, Clarinet
Grace O'Connell, Trumpet
David Seder, Trombone
Joseph Vaz, Piano

VALERIE COLEMAN
(b. 1970)

Portraits of Langston (2007)

I. Prelude: Helen Keller
II. Danse Africaine
III. Le Grand Duc Mambo
IV. Silver Rain
V. Parisian Cabaret
VI. Harlem's Summer Night

Cameron Cullen, Flute
Nicole Martin, Clarinet
Joseph Vaz, Piano
Adam Jaggernaut, Student Narrator
Juliana Mari, Student Narrator
Sam Sexton, Student Narrator

INTERMISSION

SAMUEL BARBER
(1910–1981)

Adagio for Strings, Op. 11 (1936)

Ensemble Connect Collaboration with Skidmore Students and String Faculty

Violin 1

Laurel Gagnon*
Clara Frost
Michael Emery**
Kiril Volkov
Zach DeGennaro
Isabella Harellick
Heather Buchanan-
Wise
Ava Albano

Violin 2

Coco Mi*
Marlowe Jacques
Josh Rodriguez**
Milo DeCostanzo
Nora Carroll
Amalia Pellecer
Sabeena Ali

Bass

Benjamin Rosan

Viola

Abby Smith*
Rebecca Perl
Stephani Emery**

Cello

Elena Ariza*
Myla Vijayan
Bea Kelzenberg

* Ensemble Connect Fellows

** Skidmore String Faculty

CHARLES IVES
(1874-1954)

*String Quartet No. 1, "From the
Salvation Army"* (ca. 1897-ca.1900, ca.
1909)

Chorale: Andante con moto

Prelude: Allegro

Offertory: Adagio cantabile

Postlude: Allegro marziale

Coco Mi, Violin
Laurel Gagnon, Violin
Abby Smith, Viola
Elena Ariza, Cello

SCOTT JOPLIN
(1868-1917)

"The Entertainer" (1902; arr. Franz
Beyer)

"Paragon Rag" (pub. 1909; arr. William
Zinn)

Coco Mi, Violin
Laurel Gagnon, Violin
Abby Smith, Viola
Elena Ariza, Cello

PROGRAM NOTES

GEORGE LEWIS (b. 1952)

Broke

This work is a sequel to my 2022 octet *Breaking*. The primary sonic material in both works is announced in the titles, and when I was composing *Breaking*, I could already hear *Broke* on the sonic horizon. As with *Breaking*, the first two books in Chinua Achebe's *African Trilogy*, *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*, provide a touchstone for engaging with *Broke*, which is about hearing struggle as the performers enact it.

Along with the realization of this new work comes the further realization that we are less at ease than ever—and part of being "broke" involves the fear of being hurled from the precipice of precarity to the desert of despair. As for the question of who "broke" it, often enough (but not always) the mirror is the place to look for answers.

At the least, this new work uses unpredictability and nonlinearity to refuse complacency, and this is perhaps what we as world citizens need right now—a way to live without a fixed and comfortable psychological abode as we weather our storms.

—George Lewis

VALERIE COLEMAN (b. 1970)

Portraits of Langston

The early 1900s was a new era for African Americans. For the first time in American history, the disciplines of visual art, music, and literature simultaneously took a turn to celebrate African American culture. As a result, the Harlem Renaissance was born. Langston Hughes was in the center of that cultural explosion, and like many African American artists who lived in Harlem, Hughes had dreams of living in Europe—living a life unfettered from segregation.

Portraits of Langston, a suite in six short movements, is my take on Hughes's poetic memories of Harlem and Europe (mainly Paris). These movements can be performed separately or in their entirety. I chose Hughes not because of who he is in literature, but because he was in fact, an “eye-witness” to legends born. His poems are so descriptive of the era, with references to particular settings and individuals that influenced him: Josephine Baker, Helen Keller, the nightlife/music of Harlem jazz clubs and Parisian cabarets. The imagery that Hughes provides gives me quite a historical palette that inspires me to illustrate a work truly unique to duo repertoire. Stylistically, this work incorporates many different elements that are translated into woodwind technique: the stride piano technique, big-band swing, cabaret music, mambo, African drumming, and even traditional spirituals.

Each movement is a musical sketch of selected (and lesser-known) poems from Langston Hughes's vast library:

Helen Keller
Danse Africaine
In Time of Silver Rain
Jazz Band in a Parisian Cabaret
Summer Night

"Le Grand Duc Mambo" is the only exception. It is a musical sketch of the jazz club in the scandalous red-light district of Montmartre where Hughes worked as a busboy for 25 cents a night.

—Valerie Coleman

I. Prelude: Helen Keller

Helen Keller

She,
In the dark,
Found light
Brighter than many ever see.
She,
Within herself,
Found loveliness,
Through the soul's own mastery.
And now the world receives
From her dower:
The message of the strength
Of inner power

II. Danse Africaine

Danse Africaine

The low beating of the tom-toms,
The slow beating of the tom-toms,
Low. . . slow
Slow. . . low -
Stirs your blood.
Dance!
A night-veiled girl
Whirls softly into a
Circle of light.
Whirls softly. . . slowly,
Like a wisp of smoke around the fire -
And the tom-toms beat,
And the tom toms beat,
And the low beating of the tom-toms

Stirs your blood.

IV. Silver Rain

In Time of Silver Rain

In time of silver rain
The earth
Puts forth new life again,
Green grasses grow
And flowers lift their heads,
And over all the plain
The wonder spreads

Of life,
Of life,
Of life!

In time of silver rain
The butterflies
Lift silken wings
To catch a rainbow cry,
And trees put forth
New leaves to sing
In joy beneath the sky
As down the roadway
Passing boys and girls
Go singing too,
In time of silver rain

When spring
And life
Are new.

V. Parisian Cabaret

Jazz Band in a Parisian Cabaret

Play that thing,
Jazz band!
Play it for the lords and ladies,

For the dukes and counts,
For the whores and gigolos,
For the American millionaires,
And the school teachers
Out for a spree.
Play it,
Jazz band!
You know that tune
That laughs and cries at the same time.
You know it.

May I?
Mais oui.
Mein Gott!
Parece una rumba.
Play it, jazz band!
You've got seven languages to speak in
And then some,
Even if you do come from Georgia.

Can I go home wid yuh, sweetie?
Sure.

VI. Harlem's Summer Night

Summer Night

The sounds
Of the Harlem night
Drop one by one into stillness.
The last player-piano is closed
The last victrola ceases with the
"Jazz Boy Blues."
The last crying baby sleeps
And the night becomes
Still as a whispering heartbeat.
I toss
Without rest in the darkness,
Weary as the tired night,
My soul
Empty as the silence,
Empty with a vague,

Aching emptiness,
Desiring,
Needing someone,
Something.

I toss without rest
In the darkness
Until the new dawn,
Wan and pale,
Descends like a white mist
Into the court-yard.

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)

Adagio for Strings

The somber *Adagio for Strings* is one of the most beloved pieces from an American composer, packing an emotional punch in just eight minutes. While the general public might know the *Adagio*, especially in its arrangement for full strings, from various movies—most memorably in the 1986 Vietnam War drama *Platoon*—or from performances at high-profile funerals and in the aftermath of national tragedies, the piece started life as the second movement of Barber's String Quartet in B minor, and we'll hear it tonight in the original version for string quartet.

The quartet was composed in 1936, when Barber was a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, about two years after graduating from the Curtis Institute of Music. Though Barber himself immediately recognized something special in the poignant *molto adagio* movement, it was Arturo Toscanini, not known for conducting American music, who pressed Barber to arrange it for full string orchestra. On November 5, 1938, Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra premiered the new arrangement in a national radio broadcast from Studio 8H in Rockefeller Center.

The *Adagio* consists of a single stepwise theme that weaves its way throughout the piece. It is couched in a simple triadic tonality and passed from the violins to the viola and the cello in the form of a canon or round, with sincere intensity and emotion. It moved a nation still in the throes of the Great Depression and it resonates to this day.

CHARLES IVES (1874-1954)

String Quartet No. 1, "From the Salvation Army"

About the Composer

Charles Ives may not have been the first American composer of classical music, but he was arguably the first true original—a maverick who broke away from the Austro-German tradition while keeping it in his back pocket, and embraced the music of the common folk to devise a thoroughly modern American idiom that reflects the diversity and multiplicity of the United States.

Ives received his earliest training from his musically adventurous father, George, who served as a bandleader during the Civil War and taught his son concepts of polytonality and polyrhythms. The precocious Charles became organist of the Danbury Baptist Church as a teenager. In the Danbury town square, he heard several bands marching toward each other, each playing a different tune—one of his father's experiments. The clash of melodies, rhythms, tempos, and tone clusters eventually reached a jagged point of coexistence and again dissipated. It made a lifelong impact on the young Ives and eventually became a trademark of his style.

His music is a potpourri of turn-of-the-century Americana and vernacular music: hymns, hoedowns, patriotic songs, ballads, parlor songs, spirituals, band music, and folk tunes assembled into musical collages that follow structures from the European model. Begun in 1897, the String Quartet No. 1 is an early exponent of Ives's musical synthesis, which he would go on to master as an after-hours and weekend composer while advancing a successful career as an insurance salesman (he started his own agency, Ives & Myrick, in 1907). Despite their inventive quality, many of Ives's essential pieces, including this quartet, were not publicly performed in his lifetime, or not in full.

About the Work

Ives began the four-movement String Quartet No. 1 during his sophomore year at Yale University, where he studied under the conservative American composer Horatio Parker and graduated in 1898. The first movement was composed as a fugue exercise for organ and later repurposed for the Symphony No. 4, while the other three, in ternary form, were originally for organ and strings, performed at a church service where the young Ives played the organ. What unifies the four movements into a coherent composition is the persuasive use of pre-existing popular themes under formal structures. By using familiar tunes, Ives often renders polyrhythms and clashing dissonances thoroughly engaging and accessible. He makes his music sound both familiar and original.

The subjects of the first movement are borrowed from the hymns “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains” and “All Hail the Power of Jesus’s Name!” with different fugal episodes separated by cadences. The remaining movements are based on various 19th-century hymns that include “Beulah Land,” “Nettleton,” “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus,” and especially “Shining Shore” by the Civil War composer George Frederick Root. Ives reassembles and sometimes superimposes the melodies, resulting in a homely sonic tapestry redolent of old-time conviviality and the simplicity of pre-industrial society. The first complete public performance of the quartet took place at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1957.

SCOTT JOPLIN (ca. 1867–1917)

“The Entertainer” (arr. Franz Beyer); “Paragon Rag” (arr. William Zinn)

Born in Texas, Scott Joplin was a key figure among turn-of-the-century musicians and composers who set the course of American music and presaged early jazz. He didn’t invent ragtime—syncopated music for piano, influenced by minstrel music, the cakewalk, and African folk music—but he gave it forms and techniques from classical music, composing his classic rags in clear structures marked by repetition and modulations. Although his “Maple Leaf Rag” (1899) became the first instrumental piece to sell more than a million copies within the composer’s lifetime, Joplin died penniless at age 48, succumbing not only to syphilis but to declining mental health brought by his mostly fruitless efforts to stage his opera *Treemonisha*.

The world would have to wait another half century until the revival of ragtime in the 1970s, riding on the triple wave of Joshua Rifkin’s best-selling 1970 album *Scott Joplin: Piano Rags*; the 1972 world premiere of *Treemonisha*, in Atlanta; and the 1973 film *The Sting*, for whose soundtrack Marvin Hamlisch adapted the 1902 rag “The Entertainer.” With its signature syncopated melody in octaves and an infectious duple meter, it is still recognizable, even hummable, today.

“Paragon Rag,” from 1909, dates from Joplin’s years in New York City, where he had moved to improve his chances of promoting *Treemonisha* (the opera was never fully staged in his lifetime). The lighthearted, jaunty “Paragon Rag” is marked by a repeated melody set in a dotted rhythm—the uneven long-short pattern is immediately catchy. Joplin dedicated the rag to the Colored Vaudeville Benevolent

Association, a professional support organization for Black performers, of which he was a member.

— Esteban Meneses

Ensemble Connect Credits

Ensemble Connect is a program of Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and the Weill Music Institute in partnership with the New York City Department of Education.

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Ensemble Connect

Artistry. Education. Advocacy. Entrepreneurship.

Ensemble Connect was created in 2007 by Carnegie Hall's Executive and Artistic Director Clive Gillinson and The Juilliard School's President Joseph W. Polisi. Ensemble Connect is a two-year fellowship program for extraordinary young professional classical musicians residing in the US that prepares them for careers that combine musical excellence with teaching, community engagement, advocacy, entrepreneurship, and leadership. It offers top-quality performance opportunities, intensive professional development, and partnerships throughout the fellowship with New York City public schools.

Ensemble Connect fellows—chosen for their musicianship, but also for their leadership qualities and commitment to music education—have come from some of the best music schools in the country, including the Colburn Conservatory of Music, Curtis Institute of Music, Eastman School of Music, The Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, New England Conservatory, Peabody Institute, Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, Stony Brook University, University of Southern California, and Yale School of Music.

Ensemble Connect has earned accolades from critics and audiences alike for the quality of its performances, as well as its fresh and open-minded approach, performing a wide range of music—from centuries past to works written days before an event—in a variety of venues. The group performs its own series at Carnegie Hall and has regularly appeared at The Juilliard School's Paul Hall and other venues across New York City. As part of a partnership with Skidmore College that began in 2007, Ensemble Connect gives master classes for university students and performs for the Saratoga Springs community both in concert halls and informal settings around town. Committed to providing the fellows with exceptional opportunities to work with contemporary music, composers, and artists, Carnegie Hall has commissioned 39 composers on behalf of Ensemble Connect since 2007. These composers and the fellows have worked closely during the creative process to present a total of 45 world-premiere performances of works, some of which have been featured in Ensemble Connect's Up Close concert series.

Along with performance opportunities at premier venues in New York City and beyond, Ensemble Connect fellows partner with instrumental music teachers in New York City public schools to share artistry with— and become central resources for—music classrooms in the five boroughs. Ensemble Connect fellows also take part in

community work, performing at many unconventional music venues across New York City, including correctional facilities, homeless shelters, senior community centers, and organizations that serve special-needs populations. Throughout the fellowship, Ensemble Connect fellows participate in rigorous, ongoing professional development to ensure that they gain the necessary skills to be successful in all areas of the program, and to give them the tools to shape purposeful, personally rewarding career paths that give back to their communities. Areas of emphasis include artistic excellence, on- and off-stage engagement strategies, advocacy, professional skills, and preparation for their in-school work.

Moving on to the next stage of their careers, Ensemble Connect's 158 alums are now making an impact on the national and international musical landscape in a variety of artistic and educational arenas. Continuing the strong bonds formed through the program, in 2011 alums formed the chamber music collective Decoda, which has been named an affiliate ensemble of Carnegie Hall.

Exemplary performers, dedicated teachers, and passionate advocates of music throughout the community, the forward-looking musicians of Ensemble Connect are redefining what it means to be a musician in the 21st century.

Visit ensembleconnect.org to learn more.

Upcoming Events

Jorge Caballero (Classical Guitar)
Friday, February 20, 7:30pm

Michael Mayo (Jazz)
Friday, February 27, 7:30pm

SURROUND: Gao Hong
Sunday, March 1, 5:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Orchestra
Tuesday, March 3, 7:00pm

Senior Guitar Voice Recital:
Ellie Ushakov
Friday, March 20, 7:00pm

Senior Voice Recital: Julia Henslee
Saturday, April 11, 11:00am
in Wilson Chapel

Skidmore in Concert:
Brass & Woodwind Ensembles
Saturday, April 11, 2:00pm
in Wilson Chapel

Senior Voice Recital: Will Harmon
Saturday, April 11, 4:00pm

Senior Voice Recital: Grace
Higginbotham
Saturday, April 11, 7:00pm

Sterne Virtuoso Series: HaeSun Paik
Friday, March 27, 7:30pm

Senior Composition/French Horn
Recital: Joshua Feldman
Saturday, March 28, 1:00pm

Senior Violin Recital: Rebecca Merber
Saturday, March 28, 4:00pm

Senior Piano Recital: Daniel Huh
Sunday, March 29, 4:00pm

Senior Voice Recital: Grace Radonis
Sunday, March 29, 7:00pm

Senior Voice Recital:
Emma Bedard and Abigail Scifres
Saturday, April 4, 12:00pm

Voices of Freedom and Unity
Friday, April 10, 7:00pm

Senior Violin Recital:
Sruti Ramaswamy, Aili Teittinen-
Gordon, and Kari Flowers
Saturday, April 25, 4:00pm

Senior Violin Recital:
Marlowe Jacques
Saturday, April 25, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Concert Band
Sunday, April 26, 1:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Guitar Ensemble
Sunday, April 26, 4:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Young Kim & Skidmore Pianists
Sunday, April 12, 3:00pm

21st Annual Skidmore
String Festival w/Pacifica Quartet
Saturday, April 18, 7:30pm

21st Annual Skidmore String Festival
w/Pacifica Quartet & Skidmore
Sunday, April 19, 2:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Chorus
Tuesday, April 21, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Big Band + Cuban Music Ensemble
Friday, April 24, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Small Jazz Ensembles + Guitar
Saturday, April 25, 12:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
String Ensembles
Sunday, April 26, 6:00pm

Skidmore in Concert:
Global Music Showcase
(Chinese + West African Ensembles)
Monday, April 27, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Orchestra
Wednesday, April 29, 7:00pm