



Arthur Zankel Music Center and
the Music Department Present

Sphinx Virtuosi

Friday, March 1st, 7:30 PM
Arthur Zankel Music Center
Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall

Program

Habari Gani*^	Quenton Blache (b. 2001)
Abran Paso*	Javier Farias (b. 1973)
from Sonata da Chiesa VI. <i>Dona Nobis Pacem</i> VII. <i>Exultate</i>	Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941)
Herencia*	Andrea Casarrubios (b. 1988)

INTERMISSION

Concertante for Two Double Basses and String Orchestra, "Galaxy"	Xavier Foley (b. 1994)
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Featuring Xavier Foley & Kebra-Seyoun Charles, basses

Sinfonietta No. 2 "Generations" <i>Misterioso: Allegro</i> <i>Alla sarabande</i> <i>Alla Burletta</i> <i>Allegro vivace</i>	Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004)
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*new work for Sphinx Virtuosi

^Habari Gani was commissioned with a gift from the Keith and Renata Ward
Emerging Composer Fund.

Sphinx Virtuosi are represented by MKI Artists:
70 S Winooski Ave. #318, Burlington, VT 05401

Program Notes

***Habari Gani* (2023)**

Quenton Blache (b.2001)

Habari Gani! This luminous opener owes its name to the Swahili greeting exchanged during the celebration of Kwanzaa. The ideals of unity and fellowship form the essence of this orchestral showpiece, where rhythm and dance lithely soar throughout. Featuring the number five in its meter and in its use of the pentatonic scale, Habari Gani springs forward like chatter of the latest news in a sub-Saharan community. On the score, the composer offers: “What’s the news? The news is joyful, exuberant, and wondrous.”

African American composer and cellist Quenton Blache is based in Los Angeles and holds degrees in cello performance and in composition from University of Southern California Thornton School of Music as well as a minor in Chinese. His prolific compositional output is distinct beyond the concert stage and extends to scoring numerous short films and documentaries. A prize-winning cellist, and participant in previous Sphinx Virtuosi tours, he returns to USC this season as a featured soloist with the Thornton Symphony. Current projects include pursuing a master's degree in screen scoring and competing in national level chess tournaments. Habari Gani fuses the composer's Cameroonian ancestral roots and character to form an electric string orchestra debut.

— Maïthéna Girault

***Abran Paso* (Make Way!)**

Javier Farias (b.1973)

This expression refers to the way in which certain ‘tangueros’ forcefully speak to their fellow dancers; demanding space on the dance floor to show off the brilliant, lithe choreographies they have prepared. This laconic statement immediately connected to the idea I had in mind when I began to write this piece: musicalize the acrobatic provocations and unrepentant attitude of the dancers and move it through each member of the orchestra allowing for their own unique take on a storied tradition.

It should be said that this piece has nothing to do with Tango, however it does have a repetitive, rhythmic motive that is clearly identifiable as Latin American. Although its exact provenance cannot be pinpointed, I've used it many times because it is one with which I connect emotionally due to its powerful, driving pulse. The only difference

being that this time I'm not using the guitar, but rather, transporting its characteristic "rasgueo" (strum) to bowed instruments.

Returning to the title... Just as the great Astor Piazzolla unapologetically reinvented the tango as a genre in his country, I too have strived to do the same by working with music and rhythms unique to mine. With that said, I endeavor to do the following: Move the strings of the guitar, the most representative instrument of Chile, to the strings of the orchestra, so that the richness of our musical traditions can be shared with the world.

Abran Paso!

— Javier Farias

***Sonata da Chiesa* (1992)**

Dona Nobis Pacem

Exultate

Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941)

Growing up as a chorister boy at the Cathedral of All Saints in NY, a fascination with the music of Arcangelo Corelli, and a commission by Thomas Jefferson High School were the inspirations that helped the Legendary Adolphus Hailstork curate the unicorn piece Sonata da Chiesa. By this point in his career his works had been recorded and performed by some of the world's greatest orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and The Philadelphia Orchestra. Sonata da Chiesa was premiered in 1992, and the title implies a style that hearkens back to 17th Century religious music. Curiously, Hailstork chose to title the movements of this Sonata using the standard choral liturgy. The Dona Nobis Pacem, filled with monophonic chant-like music exploring open and parallel harmonic motion, flows seamlessly into the Finale Exultate, a vigorous chorale verging on ecstasy. Hailstork ingeniously portrays the cathedrals; large stone walls feature large blocks of sound and expansive chordal voicing. While the Dona Nobis is highly reverent and functional yet it's also wandering and contrapuntal, the Exultate evolves into a boisterous, dance-like theme that eventually returns to the monophonic harmonic motion. The piece spans generations stylistically as Hailstork weaves his own harmonic language with the reverent tonal counterpoint of the 17th Century.

— Aaron King Vaughn

***Herencia* for String Orchestra (2023)**

Andrea Casarrubios (b.1988)

In a work titled *Herencia*, the Spanish for both "inheritance" and "heritage," it is natural for you to wonder about the roots of the piece itself, and the myriad stylistic threads with which it is woven. However, for this work, my inspiration was not a particular musical "heritage" or genre; rather, it was the artists who would be playing it. I envisioned the remarkable musicians of Sphinx Virtuosi taking the stage to play this piece, and I thought of how each individual has trailing behind them a unique history of unfathomable complexity; an epic that they bring to bear in every moment of performance. I also imagined the way this collection of histories would one day coalesce with a shared intention to illuminate their world — your world — with music. This image was the seed from which *Herencia* came to be. As you listen, I encourage you to observe this phenomenon as it unfolds on stage, and at the same time to reflect on your own epic, in all its wondrous immensity, and how it has led to you sitting here in this moment.

— Andrea Casarrubios

Concertante for Two Double Basses and String Orchestra, "Galaxy" (2023)

Xavier Foley (b.1994)

When composing *Galaxy*, I wanted to experiment with chord progressions one might imagine hearing when envisioning outer space as frequently portrayed in the media. Simultaneously, I wanted to build a conversation between the double bass soloists and the self-conducted ensemble. The intrigue and ethos of the work are to showcase the solo instruments as virtuosic and star-like, which is atypical for most conventional repertoire. While the double bass is not often thought of as a solo instrument, that framing has been important to me as both a frequent soloist and composer. Defying stereotypes and fully exploring the range of possibilities of the instrument is at the core of this concertante. In one way, the title suggests that the dominant solo voices are the brightest stars in the galaxy. In another, I imagine 100 billion stars, each offering a different amount and type of light. That perspective enriches our own understanding of the world and the great diversity of voices and lights that comprise such a rich galaxy. In imagining the different types of light, rather than prescribing the experience, I would love for our audiences to explore each of the sound palates and allow their imagination to take them on a unique sonic journey as they experience this work for the first time.

— Xavier Foley

Sinfonietta No. 2, “Generations” (1996)

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004)

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson shares the following information directly in the score for this piece:

The inspiration for this composition, though non-programmatic, is somewhat autobiographical in that it represents my attempts at what were and are my relationships to members of my family - past and present. While each of the movements is without a strict “formal” mode, an informal analysis of their structures is as follows:

1. *Misterioso* and *Allegro* (to my daughter) is based on two motifs: the B-A-C-H idea (in German these letters represent the pitches B-flat, A-natural, C-natural, and B-natural), and the American folk tune “Mockingbird,” also known as “Hush Li'l Baby, Don't Say a Word.”
2. *Alla sarabande* (sarabande, a 17th and 18th century dance in slow triple meter) is dedicated to the matriarchs of my immediate family (of which there were for me, three), each of whom contributed a unique form of guidance for life's journey.
3. *Alla Burletta* (to my grandson). A *burletta* is an Italian term for a diminutive burlesca or burlesque-type work - a composition in a playful and jesting mood. Thematically, this movement is based on the pop tune “Li'l Brown Jug.”
4. *Allegro vivace*. This movement is a loosely constructed third rondo, which thematically begins with a *fughetta* (original melody), has a second theme (African in origin), and a third theme (“Mockingbird” paraphrased). Once again, the B-A-C-H idea from the first movement is the musical thread that ties these elements together. This movement is dedicated to the patriarchs of my family, known and unknown, past, present and future, for generations.

How fortunate for us to have been left with such a descriptive intent behind this genius's work! The *Sinfonietta* is full of substance, contrast, and beauty. In the *Alla Burletta* movement, listen for humor in the syncopated pizzicatos from each string section. The work with its clear jazz influences will lift your spirits, and the surprise ending is sure to leave any listener with a sense of effervescent delight!

—Afa Dworkin

Personnel

VIOLIN 1

Alex Gonzalez (Concertmaster)
Clayton D Penrose-Whitmore
Brendon Elliott
Sandro Leal-Santiesteban

VIOLIN 2

Sabrina Bradford (Principal)
Maithéna Girault
Caitlin Edwards
Thierry de Lucas

VIOLA

Celia Hatton (Principal)
Robert Alvarado Switala
Bill Neri
Kayla Cabrera

CELLO

Tommy Mesa (Principal)
Eri Snowden-Rodriguez
Diana Flores
Lindsey Sharpe

BASS

Jonathan Colbert (Principal)
Christopher Johnson

SOLOISTS

Xavier Foley (soloist on Foley only)
Kebra-Seyoun Charles (soloist on Foley only)

Upcoming Events

Schenectady-Saratoga Symphony Orchestra –
“Die Fledermaus”
Sunday, March 17, 3:00pm

“Salt” Micro-Opera
Friday, March 22, 7:00pm

Senior Piano Recital: Seth Spital
Saturday, March 30, 1:00pm

Senior Cello Recital: Zack Barnet
Saturday, March 30, 4:00pm

Senior Voice Recital: Lucrezia Zichichi
Friday, April 5, 4:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Brass & Woodwind
Ensembles
Saturday, April 6, 1:00pm

Young Kim & Skidmore Pianists
Saturday, April 6, 3:00pm

Sr Voice Recital: Maggie Besthoff
Saturday, April 6, 7:00pm

Senior Cello Recital: Anna Cates
Sunday, April 7, 1:00pm

Senior Flute Recital: Lydia Watkins
Saturday, April 7, 4:00pm

Sr Voice Recital: Johnny Mulcahy
Sunday, April 7, 7:00pm

Sr Jazz Recital: Elan Stadelmann
Friday, April 12, 4:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Big Band &
Vocal Soul Collective
Saturday, April 13, 7:00pm

Skidmore String Festival with the
Miró Quartet
Saturday, April 20, 7:30pm

Senior Piano Recitals: Raisa Ihnat &
Dylan Salinger
Sunday, April 21, 12:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Small Jazz
Ensembles
Tuesday, April 23, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Chorus
Thursday, April 26, 4:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: String
Ensembles
Friday, April 26, 4:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Global Music
Showcase
Saturday, April 27, 4:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Concert Band
Sunday, April 28, 1:00pm

Skidmore in Concert: Guitar
Ensemble
Sunday, April 28, 4:00pm

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