

Classical Movements Presents:
**“Sounds of Hope &
Harmony”**

*Intimate, outdoor one-hour concerts
for socially distanced audiences*

Sweet Songs of Joy and Sorrow
August 30, 2020, 6:00 PM & 7:30 PM

Alexandria Crichlow, soprano
V. Savoy McIlwain, baritone
Dr. Lester Green, piano | Pamela Simonson, narrator

*Presented in collaboration with
Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts
(CAAPA)*

The Songs of the Slave
from *John Brown*

Kirke Mechem
(b. 1925)

Give Me Jesus

Traditional

Black Soldier's Civil War Chant
from *Deep Rivers*

Mohammed Fairouz
(b. 1985)

A Living Word

Dr. Lester Green
(b. 1973)

Minstrel Man
from *Three Dream Portraits*

Margaret Bonds
(1913-1972)

Creole Girl

Leslie Adams
(b. 1932)

Lift Every Voice

J. Rosamond Johnson
(1873-1954)

“Avant de quitter ces lieux”
Jewel Song: “Ah! je ris de me voir”
from *Faust*

Charles Gounod
(1818-1893)

Take My Hand, Precious Lord

Thomas A. Dorsey
(1899-1993)

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel

Traditional
arr. David Neff

This Little Light

Harry Dixon Loes
(1892-1965)
arr. Markus Williams

If I Can Help Somebody

Alma Androzzo
(1912-2001)
arr. Nathan Carter

Oh, Freedom

Traditional

We Shall Overcome

Traditional

Presented in collaboration with:

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(CAAPA)



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opportunities for Black classical musicians and others in the performing
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Introduction and Program Notes

Classical Movements welcomes you back to our “Secret Garden” at the Rectory, our home in Old Town Alexandria. This evening, we are proud to collaborate with **CAAPA – Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts** to bring you this special installment in our “Sounds of Hope & Harmony” series, deeply moving and gorgeous music that captures the powerful story and spirit of one of the Civil Rights Movement’s most iconic moments.

-- Classical Movements

“God has wrought many things out of oppression. He has endowed his creatures with the capacity to create—and from this capacity has flowed the sweet songs of sorrow and joy that have allowed man to cope with his environment and many different situations... This is triumphant music.” – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On August 28, 1963 the **March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom**, now popularly known simply as **The March on Washington**, brought hundreds of thousands of people to the National Mall for what would become one of the defining moments of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s. Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech remains one of the definitive moments of the movement and arguably the most celebrated speech of the 20th Century, but the official program of the event also featured a number of other luminaries, pioneers and activists including performances by musicians ranging from **Mahalia Jackson** to **Joan Baez** to **Marian Anderson**, among many others. This evening’s program celebrates the role music played in this iconic demonstration and throughout the long history of striving for justice and equality.

Our program begins with musical reflections on the experience of slavery in America. Written for the ambitious opera *John Brown* about the life of the eponymous abolitionist, Kirke Mechem’s “Songs of the Slave” premiered in 1994 and sets text by Frederick Douglass, who escaped slavery in Maryland and became a widely celebrated writer and a leader of the abolitionist movement. “Give Me Jesus” is one of the thousands of spirituals that used Biblical themes to respond to the oppression and violence of slavery.

The following two songs are contemporary reflections on the experience in the Reconstruction South, immediately

following the Civil War and the abolition of slavery: Lester Green's "A Living Dream" and "The Black Soldier's Civil War Chant" by Mohammed Fairouz, commissioned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of another iconic moment in the Civil Rights Movement, the Selma to Montgomery Freedom Marches and the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, with poetry by the great poet Langston Hughes.

A leader of the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes was a close friend of the celebrated composer Margaret Bonds, one of the first black composers to gain widespread recognition in the United States. From 1954, "Minstrel Man" is one of many that use Hughes's poetry to explore a wide range of often harrowing experiences. Leslie Adams is particularly celebrated for his vocal and choral music. Part of the cycle "Nightsongs" published in 1996, "Creole Girl" sets poetry by Leslie Morgan Collins, who served as Professor of Literature at Fisk University for 65 years.

"Lift Every Voice and Sing" was first published as a poem by the writer and activist James Wheldon Johnson in 1900. Since set to music by the poet's brother J. Rosamund Johnson in 1905, this anthem has come to be considered by many as the "Black National Anthem."

Well into the 20th century, talented Black musicians were excluded from major stages and opera houses, although gifted singers such as the soprano Sissieretta Jones found considerable success in the concert hall and abroad. It was only in 1955 that Marian Anderson became the first African-American to appear as a soloist at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. These two excerpts from one of the most famous operas ever – the French opera *Faust* by Charles Gounod – were frequent staples of both the opera house and concert hall. In his aria from the second act, the soldier Valentin prays that God watches over his sister Marguerite, before he leaves for war. In Marguerite's famous "Jewel Song" the third act, the young woman is surprised and delighted to discover a chest of jewelry in her garden – part of a snare set for her by Faust and the devil.

The songs that follow became closely associated with the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" to a text and adapted melody by the Reverend Thomas Dorsey was a favorite of Martin Luther King; Mahalia Jackson, who had performed it at Dr. King's request at many rallies, performed it at his funeral following his assassination in 1968.

“Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel” is a classic spiritual on the theme of deliverance and strength.

“This Little Light of Mine” might be the most familiar of the many hymns composed by Harry Dixon Loes – and so closely associated with the movement that it is often misattributed as a spiritual.

Although she received no formal musical training, the composer and pianist Alma Androzzo published many beloved and popular songs; “If I Can Help Somebody” was first recorded in 1946 and later sung by a wide range of artists, including Mahalia Jackson.

The concert ends with two songs performed by Joan Baez at the March on Washington. After singing the freedom song “Oh Freedom,” Baez led the assembled crowd in “We Shall Overcome” – a song with an uncertain origin in the early 20th century, but a message that remains relevant to this day.

Performer Biographies

A native of New York City, **Alexandria Crichlow** is known for her captivating stage presence, and smooth timbre. Alexandria received the Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in Vocal Performance in 2019 from Morgan State University.

She is an honored recipient of multiple grants and competitions including First prize winner in The National Association of Teachers Maryland District Competition, and The National Association of Negro Musicians Maryland Chapter’s Marian Anderson Vocal Competition. Alexandria has traveled and played numerous roles such as La Zelatrice (Suor Angelica) with Amalfi Coast Music Festival in Maiori, Italy. Alice Ruth Moore (Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadows) with Morgan State University Opera Workshop Program. In 2019 Alexandria’s portrayal of Maria in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra production of Porgy & Bess (Baltimore, Maryland) under the direction of Marin Alsop, paved the way for her return to the role in the Philadelphia Orchestra’s 2020 live CD Recording of Porgy & Bess Highlights at the world renown Kimmel Center (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) .

Currently, Alexandria studies Opera Performance at Mannes School of Music where she studies with Margaret Lattimore. She looks forward to making her Czech

Republic debut with OpernFest Prague and Berlin, Germany debut playing Suor Genovieffa and Lauretta in Berlin Opera Academy's OpernFest 2021 - 2022 Season productions of Suor Angelica and Gianni Schicchi . As an artist and entrepreneur, Alexandria looks forward to future musical endeavors to cultivate, create, and aid the world.

V. SAVOY MCILWAIN, Baritone, is a native Washingtonian graduate of the famed Duke Ellington School of the Arts and the creator of 'The Savoy Series Emerging Artist Project.' Savoy holds a BM in Performance from the University of Northern Iowa and also holds a MM in Opera from the University of Maryland at College Park where he graduated from the Maryland Opera Studio. Savoy is truly a treasure of unmatched talent! A Singing Actor who's Artistry speaks directly to the love of Mankind.

Savoy is a 2007 Metropolitan Opera Regional Finalist, NATS Regional Finalist, Omega Psi Phi first place winner and is a former award recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts. Equally comfortable in the concert hall and theater; his national credits include Marcello in Puccini's La Boheme, Morales in Bizet's Carmen, Leporello in Mozart's Don Giovanni, Chief Cameahwait and Sergeant Floyd in Mager's Dream of the Pacific. International credits include Jake and Jim in Gershwin's Porgy and Bess, Guglielmo in Cosi fan tutte and the European premiere of H. Leslie Adam's 'Drums of Tragedy'. His concert works include Handel's Messiah, Rossini's Stabat Mater, Saint-Saëns Christmas Oratorio and Ralph Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music. Savoy has also made his musical theatre debut as Mayor in Strega Nona and Joe in Hammerstein and Kern's Show Boat.

Both an International Artist and specialist in performing American/New works, Savoy has recently debuted Buddy Bolden in Jelly's Last Jam at Signature Theatre and The Bus/Dryer in Kushner's Caroline or Change at Roundhouse Theatre. Recent performances include Mr. McIlwain playing the Title Role of Sweeney Todd at Rep Stage in Columbia, Maryland and playing Thomas Rutling in Jubilee at Arena Stage. www.vsavoymcilwain.com

Lester Green, pianist and vocal coach, completed a master's degree in piano performance at the Peabody Conservatory in 1997 with legendary pianist Ann Schein. He began his teaching and performing career shortly thereafter. Green continued further piano studies with

Marian Hahn and Rita Sloan. He earned his D.M.A. in collaborative piano in 2005.

Green has performed a wide variety of repertoire and genres in numerous solo recitals, chamber music concerts and vocal recitals with various artists, many of whom enjoy national and international acclaim in the opera and musical theater worlds. In 2005, Green was offered an assistant conductor contract with the Washington National Opera to assist in its production of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and also performed the onstage piano role of Jasbo Brown in that production.

Green has served at various times as artist faculty for various institutions including the Peabody Institute, Morgan State University and Howard University, as well as the Duke Ellington School for the Arts in Washington, D.C. His former students enjoy success in the operatic, gospel and contemporary music scenes, and have been awarded scholarships to major music schools, conservatories, young artist training programs and have won competitions and prizes.

In his role as music director, Green has worked with various arts organizations, nonprofits and religious organizations in their community outreach projects. Since 2014, Green has served as the artistic director for the Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts, an organization that seeks to recognize the achievements and contributions of persons of color to the classical music industry.

Green earned an undergraduate degree in piano performance with a concentration in German Language Studies from the University of South Carolina in 1995. He joined the faculty of the UMD School of Music's Division of Voice and Opera in January, 2020.

Pamela T. Simonson, full lyric soprano, author, and charity founder has been seen on stages throughout the United States and Europe with the Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, and the Glory Gospel Singers. Pamela has been a featured soloist with the American Center for Puccini Studies and in Washington National Opera's productions of *Porgy and Bess*, *Showboat*, and *Dead Man Walking*. Ms. Simonson has also been seen in over 30 opera productions such as *La Traviata*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Aïda*, *The Magic Flute*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Macbeth* among many others. Pamela is on the roster for the American Spiritual Ensemble and



has frequently performed the soprano solo in Handel's Messiah throughout the Washington, DC metro area.

Ms. Simonson obtained her Bachelor of Music degree from Eastman School of Music in Vocal Performance, Master of Music degree from Manhattan School of Music, NYC, where she also served as Assistant to the Director for the Preparatory Division. She has a second level of Professional Certification in Orff Schulwerk Music Studies from George Mason University, VA. Ms. Simonson has served as Director of Music for Camp Arena Stage, Washington, DC for over 10 years, and has been soprano section leader for New York City and Washington, DC area church choirs. She is currently a vocal music teacher for Prince George's County Public Schools in MD and also conducts workshops, seminars, and coaches private music students in the region.

In 2014, Ms. Simonson was awarded the esteemed Prince George's County "Forty Under 40" Award for her efforts in the arts community. She is the co-author of the award-winning book "Pearls of Wisdom from Three Generations" with her mother and grandmother and is the Co-Founder along with her musically gifted brother Victor Simonson, of the non-profit 501c3 arts organization CAAPA (Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts) an organization dedicated to "Bringing Color to the Classics" by supporting black classical musicians and others in the performing arts.

Coming Soon to **“Sounds of Hope & Harmony”**

Saturday, September 12, 2020: “A Brand New Day”

Choral Music Returns!

The Choir of Hope & Harmony
Anthony Blake Clark, conductor

Twelve professional singers perform 400 years of compelling choral music by Byrd, Britten, Panufnik, Coleridge-Taylor, Barnett and more on themes of hope in times of uncertainty

Saturday, September 19, 2020: “An Evening of Novel Ensembles”

Innovative and Groundbreaking Chamber Music

Members of the National Symphony Orchestra:
Ira Gold, bass | Alexander Jacobsen, bass
Charles Nilles, bass | Jeffrey Weisner, bass
Jamie Roberts, oboe | Paul Cigan, clarinet | Ying Fu, violin
Daniel Foster, viola | Alexander Jacobsen, bass

An ambitious, imaginative and eclectic program featuring Prokofiev’s famous Quintet in G minor for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, and double bass and one-of-a-kind arrangements for double-bass quartet of classical and pop hits by Gershwin, Bach, O’Connor, Bjork, A-Ha, Seal and the Beatles.

Saturday, September 26, 2020: “Cabaret in the Twilight”

Jazz and Musical Theatre

Awa Sal Secka | Christian Douglas

The night lights up with jazz, musical theater and popular music, featuring the music of George Gershwin, Stephen Sondheim, Billy Joel, Sara Bareilles and original music by the artists.

Saturday, October 3 and Sunday, October 4, 2020:

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Special Event

Classical Favorites and Tango

ASO Music Director Jim Ross
Members of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra

Beethoven’s uplifting Septet for winds and strings and Piazzolla’s iconic tango “Oblivion” will mingle in the fresh outdoor air. Featured bandoneonist Emmanuel Trifilio will transport us to a night club in Buenos Aires, even as Beethoven’s melodies linger in the atmosphere.

Click here for tickets and more information:

<https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>



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Sounds of Hope & Harmony
September 12, 2020
6pm | 7:30pm • Alexandria, VA

LIVE OUTDOOR CHORAL CONCERT

**The Choir of
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Anthony Blake Clark, conductor

12 Professional singers perform
400 years of compelling choral music

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About Classical Movements

The premier concert tour company for the world's great [orchestras](#) and [choirs](#), Classical Movements creates meaningful cultural experiences through music in 145 countries. An industry leader for 28 years, Classical Movements organizes more than 60 tours every year, producing some 200 concerts every season. Producer of two international choral festivals—Ihlombe! in South Africa and Serenade! in Washington, D.C.—and the Prague Summer Nights: Young Artists Music Festival, in addition, Classical Movements' Eric Daniel Helms New Music Program has commissioned 97 works from Grammy, Oscar and Pulitzer Prize-winning composers. Winner of Americans for the Arts' BCA10: Best Businesses Partnering with the Arts Award, since its founding in 1992, as a truly global company, Classical Movements remains committed to facilitating cultural diplomacy across the world—promoting peace through the medium of music.

About the Rectory

Built in 1785 and the home of Classical Movements' offices since 2014, the building formerly served as the rectory of the nearby historic Christ Church, once the church of George Washington. Since then, it has been owned by several distinguished Virginians and has been a commercial space since the 1960's. Located in the heart of beautiful Old Town Alexandria at 711 Princess Street, the Rectory is minutes away from the shops and restaurants of bustling King Street and is easily accessible by bus and metro.

Seating at the Secret Garden

