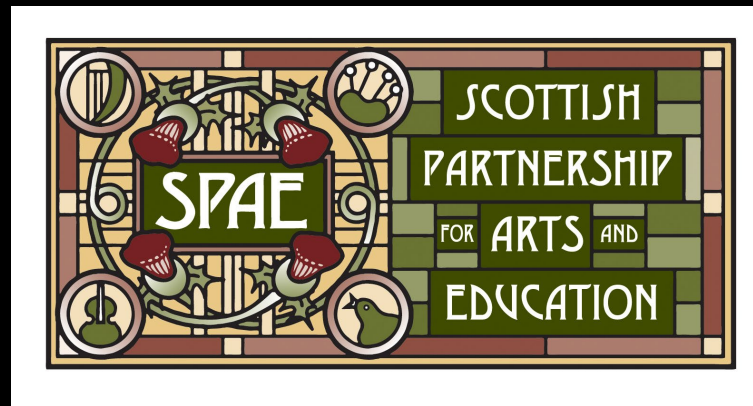


# Voices Lifted – Two Centuries of Black Composers of Opera

Diane McCullough, presenter



# IN THIS PRESENTATION

- The musical forces (folk, dance, spirituals, classical) that existed in both Europe and the United States (Celtic and West African)
- The musical milieu in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century African American community
- Four historic composers of opera and what they had in common
- Black musicians' fundamental place at the heart of the development of an "American" sound in many genres of American music – folk, pop, jazz, and classical
- Current practices to correct harms done
  - Five living composers
  - Opera America
  - Opera Theatre of St. Louis

Joseph de Bologne Chevalier de St. George  
1744-1799



# The Anonymous Lover at Los Angeles Opera November 14, 2020



# LA Opera PR Clip for Virtual Production, November 14, 2020



Bologne was seminal in the development of  
the Symphonie Concertante



# Bologne, Symphonie Concertante in G, Allegro – Buskaid Orchestra



# West African Stringed Instruments

**KORA**



**RITI**





# African Classical Music Ensemble, Kasse Mady Diabate – “There Was a Time”

African Classical Music Ensemble

# Rustic Dance 1833 – William Sidney Mount



# 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MAP OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND



# Crooked Shanks by Newport Gardner, Dr. John Turner, fiddle, Gary Whaley, piano

Crooked Shanks

chords and edit by G. Whaley *aka Newport Gardner 1803*  
*orig Accramar Mareycoo – a freed slave*

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The third staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The fourth and fifth staves end with double bar lines and repeat signs. Chord markings (G, C, D) are placed above the notes on each staff to indicate the harmonic structure.

# Moving West

**Barber Shop Concert – Trenton Falls,  
New York - 1860**



**Eastman Johnson, 1866**



# Famous Black Missouri Fiddlers

**Bill Driver**



**Bill Katon**



# Hoedowns, Reels, and Frolics

Roots and Branches of  
Southern Appalachian Dance

Phil Jamison



# Jim Perry – Cowboy Fiddler and The Banjo Lesson – Henry Osawa Tanner



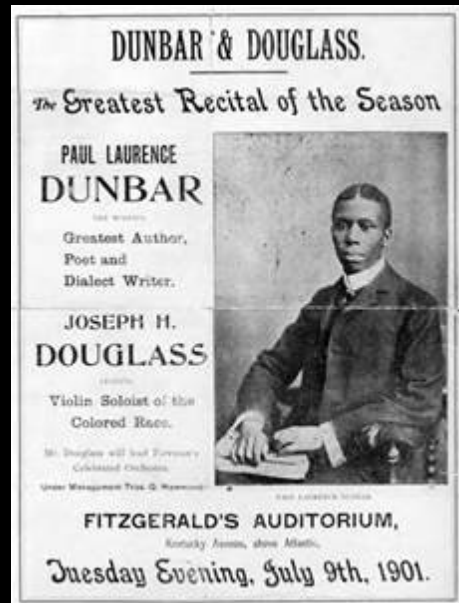


# Summit Avenue Ensemble – Atlanta, Georgia 1889

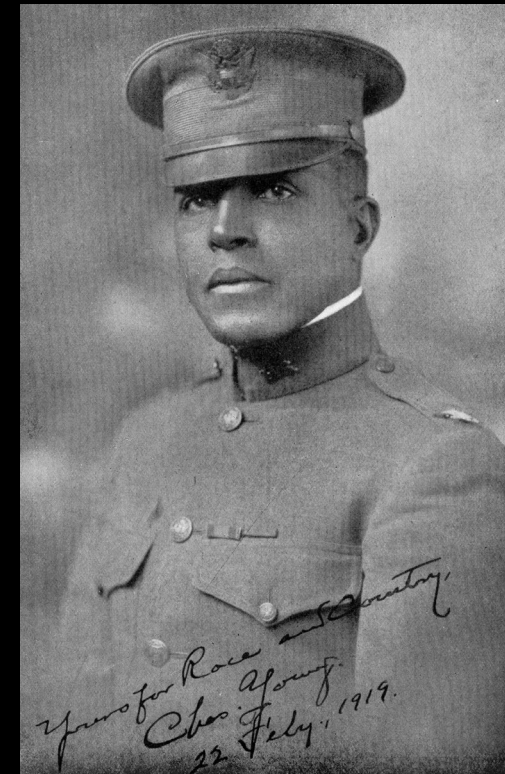


# Famous People who played violin

**Paul Laurence Dunbar, poet played violin and piano – here in concert with Joseph Douglass**



**Colonel Charles Young, Buffalo Soldiers played violin, piano and composed**



# Anna Murray Douglass, Joseph and Frederick Douglass



# Jimmy Palao – Original Creole Orchestra



# John Thomas Douglass 1847-1886

- 1868 – copyright for his opera, “Virginia’s Ball”
- Performed in 1868 at the Stuyvesant Institute in New York
- Score has been lost but title suggests place and event
- Documents in Old Williamsburg, VA give evidence of who played for the dances and what music was played

Harry Lawrence Freeman 1869-1954



# SCOTT JOPLIN 1868-1917



# William Grant Still – 1895 - 1978





# Excerpt from Afro-American Symphony - 1930





# Celeste's Aria – opening of “Troubled Island”



# What these composers had in common

- They were all multi-instrumentalist.
- All made their living in popular forms of music and/or entertainment in vogue at their time.
- All were prepared for careers in classical music but faced racism and segregation.
- All were entrepreneurial and created opportunities for themselves where they could.
- The stories they told through the operatic form reflect their lived experience and knowledge of Black history

# Adolphus Hailstork, Terence Blanchard, Damien Sneed, Rhiannon Giddens, and Michael Abels



# MARC SCORCA, DIRECTOR AND VISIONARY



**OPERA  
AMERICA**

# OTSL Commissions and Revivals

- “Under the Double Moon” – Anthony Davis – 1989
- “Joshua’s Boots” – Adolphus Hailstork – 1999 – youth opera
- “Champion” – Terence Blanchard – 2013
- “Fire Shut Up in My Bones” – Terence Blanchard – 2019
- “Treemonisha” – Scott Joplin – 2000 – revival
- “Highway 1, U.S.A.” – William Grant Still – 2021 – revival
- “Treemonisha” – Scott Joplin re-imagined by Damien Sneed, composer and Karen Chilton, librettist - 2023

# “JOSHUA’S BOOTS” by Adolphus Hailstork photos from OTSL 2011 production





# Joshua's Boots, scene 1 ending and scene 2 opening – Mama, Sarah, Abraham, Joshua Amarillo Opera



Steal away, steal away, steal away  
to Jesus. Steal away, steal away  
Son. You ain't got time to stay  
here. Oh Lord help him. My  
Joshua's a-runnin.' The trumpet  
cries within-a his soul. He ain't got  
time to stay here.

Steal away son/brother. You ain't  
got time to stay here.

I go shoes, you got shoes.....

# Goodbye, Ole Paint – chorus – scene 2

Goodbye, Ole Paint, I'm a-leavin'  
Cheyenne. I'm off for Montan'. I'm  
a-leavin' Cheyenne.



# Joshua's Boots finale – Jorell Williams, Joshua Amarillo Opera



I found a life, Mama. I found a life in the West. A life for you too, Mama, and for Sarah and Abraham. Calves, Mama, calves, the start of my own herd. My own brand, my own name, and, soon, my own land. Before you know it, Mama, I'm gonna bring you on a westbound train. We'll make a life here. I've found my life.

Terence Blanchard, Kasi Lemons – based on  
the memoir by Charles Blow



# Clayco future leaders fellowship

- 2021 cohort – Lyanne Alvarado, Chandler Johnson, Quentin Beverly
- 2022 cohort – Aaron Walker, Kiandra Mays, Andrea Ochoa
- 2023 cohort – Jhane Perdue, Linda Holyoke, Jenna Pieper



CLAYCO FUTURE LEADERS FELLOWSHIP

CLAYCO FUTURE LEADERS FELLOWSHIP

CLAYCO FUTURE LEADERS FELLOWSHIP

New Works Collective – 2022-2023  
Del'Shawn Taylor, Samiya Bashir, Simon Tam, Joe X. Jiang, Tre'von  
Griffith, Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj



# A Master Class for the Artists in Training (high school program)



