

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

A Tribute to the Legacy of Black Composers—and Beyond

Welcome to today's performance presented by members of Chicago Sinfonietta. Founded by Paul Freeman in 1987, Chicago Sinfonietta is the nation's most diverse and innovative orchestra. We perform in downtown Chicago and Naperville from September through May and invite you to join us for a full symphony experience!

Today's program is a celebration of music created by the greatest Black composers in history and the rich cultures that inspired them. We hope you enjoy this unique musical journey!

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE



Violinist **Fahad Awan** is a recent graduate of Indiana University where he studied with Alexander Kerr. Musical education was scarce while growing up in rural Texas, but Fahad was fortunate to meet and study with the former concertmaster of the Baltimore Symphony, Isidor Saslav. Awan has performed in festivals across the United States as well as the Czech Republic. Awan is also a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music where he was a student of David Updegraff and Stephen Rose. Awan has recently performed with the Grant Park Music Festival as a 2018 Project Inclusion Fellow, and is currently a Chicago Sinfonietta Project Inclusion Fellow and a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. In his free time Awan enjoys fly fishing, camping, hiking, and canoeing.



Moroccan-Italian cellist, **Najette Abouelhadi** has a passion for community connectivity and inclusion. Abouelhadi currently performs as a Project Inclusion Fellow with Chicago Sinfonietta and with Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Her love of orchestra started at the age of seven, and she has since gone on to be principal cellist of the Music Academy of the West Festival Orchestra, the Music Academy International Orchestra based in Trentino, Italy, among others. She has performed in concert with David Daniels, Denyce Graves, Marina Piccinini, Matt Aucoin, and Leon Fleisher. She has studied and been coached by some of the most prominent musicians of our time most notably the String Quartet Seminar at Music Academy of the West with the Takács Quartet, and the Beethoven Institute with the Brentano Quartet.



Caitlin Edwards, violin, began studying at the age of eight, through the Music Opportunity Program, a non-profit organization in Birmingham Alabama. Winner of a number of competitions, Edwards has performed with Dove, award winning Gospel artist Babbie Mason, and with Grammy award winning artists Israel Houghton and Darlene Zschech. Caitlin attended the University of Louisville where she studied with J. Patrick Rafferty. In 2015, she was the state winner of the Strings Division MTNA Young Artists Competition and in 2016 won a Project Inclusion Fellowship with the Grant Park Music Festival and Chicago Sinfonietta. Caitlin currently plays a Neapolitan violin, labeled "Joseph Gagliano Filius - fecit Neap. 1760" generously on loan from the Maestro Foundation.



Seth Pae, originally from Cleveland, Ohio, has been playing the viola since age 9. Pae got his start in a public school music program. His first primary teacher was Lembi Veskimets of the Cleveland Orchestra. Pae studied with Louise Zeitlin and earned his bachelor's degree at Baldwin Wallace University. Pae completed both a Master's Degree and an Artist Diploma at DePaul University studying with Wei-Ting Quo of the Chicago Symphony, and legendary Chicago violist, Rami Solomonow. Seth was a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago from 2015-2018, and has performed with the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra, and the Lyric Opera Orchestra. He is in his second year performing with the Chicago Sinfonietta as their Project Inclusion Fellow.

PROGRAM



Five Folksongs: V. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot | Florence Price (1951)

Florence Price's prominence as a composer started in 1933 when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra was the first to perform a work by an African American woman. *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, was a code song and a spiritual that helped slaves escape along the Underground Railroad. This piece comes from a set of five folksongs that take the western classical compositional style of counterpoint, combine it with negro spirituals, and are written with Price's 1950's urban-influenced style.

String Quartet No. 1 in C Major, Op. 1, No. 1: Mvt. II | Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1773)

Afro-French composer, Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, was born to a white plantation owner and a young slave woman. By the end of his teenage years he was the best fencer in France, a virtuoso violinist by his early twenties, and within a decade he was the first black colonel for the first all-black regiment during the French Revolution. His legacy includes being called "the Black Mozart" — even though he was a nemesis of the wunderkind. His music is light, melodic, and simple in form.

It Don't Mean a Thing (If it Ain't Got That Swing) | Duke Ellington (1932)

Music legend, Duke Ellington, wrote this iconic, jazz-inflected work in Chicago's Lincoln Tavern in 1932. The song became famous, Ellington wrote, "as the expression of a sentiment which prevailed among jazz musicians at the time." Ellington credited the saying as a "credo" of his former trumpeter, Bubber Miley, and the tune was inducted into the Grammy Hall of fame in 2008.

Lyric for Strings | George Walker (1946)

George Walker was the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music. This piece, *Lyric for Strings*, originally entitled Lament, is his best known and most performed work. It was inspired by the death of a loved one. Listen for the classical, spiritual, and hymnal influences.

Danzas de Panama, IV. Cumbia y Congo | William Grant Still (1948)

One of the most important African-American composers of the 20th, Still was determined to validate African-inspired music as part of the American cultural mainstream. *Danzas de Panama* demonstrates Still's interest in Caribbean color, each movement incorporating elements of African, Spanish, and even Indian rhythm and melody.

I Will Trust in the Lord | Undine Smith Moore (1984)

Deeply affected by growing up as a direct descendant of slaves in rural Virginia and then as a young adult in New York during the Harlem Renaissance, Undine Smith Moore considered African American music "rich in tradition with space of all manner of musical expression". Her influences included African American spirituals all the way to Stravinsky and serialism, all of which can be heard in *I Will Trust in the Lord*.

(You Make me Feel Like) A Natural Woman | Aretha Franklin (1967)

While most of us know Aretha Franklin as the "Queen of Soul", she was a talented composer as well. Her anthemic (You Make me Feel Like) A Natural Woman is a song about a woman feeling appreciated by her husband. Her tone brimmed with vivacity both despite and alongside pain. The song immediately became an anthem of social change and added yet another jewel to this Queen's crown.

String Quartet No. 5 "Rosa Parks", Mvt 1 | Daniel Bernard Roumain (2005)

Daniel Bernard Roumain is dedicated to creating socially and politically conscious music by blending funk, hip-hop and classical music to create a personal sonic vision. This movement entitled "Klap Ur Handz" asks the players (and audience!) to clap, a feature DBR says was inspired by hip-hop rhythms but dates back to the music of Cro-Magnon man and is very communal.

Civil Rights Medley (2019) | Arr. Seth Pae

This medley arranged by our violist, Seth Pae, includes four hopeful spirituals/gospels that have all come to be anthems of the Civil Rights Movement. It includes *Deep River*, *This Little Light of Mine*, *Wade in the Water*, and ends with *We Shall Overcome*. *Deep River* is a song of hope and longing, expressing the desire for peace and freedom. *This Little Light of Mine*, composed by Harry Dixon Loes, has a biblical theme and portrays a sense of unity. *Wade in the Water* was a signal song along the Underground Railroad, used by Harriet Tubman, to tell slaves to "get off the trail and into the water to make v slavecatchers' dogs couldn't find them." And lastly, *We Shall Overcome* has its origins as a gospel, folk, and labor song turned Civil Rights anthem. Chicago Sinfonietta closes every Martin Luther King concert by inviting the audience to stand, hold hands, and sing this still-relevant call to action.