

THE AMHERST COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
PRESENTS

The Catalyst Quartet

Karla Donehew-Perez, violin

Abi Fayette, violin

Paul Laraia, viola

Karlos Rodriguez, cello

with

Anthony McGill, clarinet

Sunday, October 24, 2021 • Buckley Recital Hall • 3 PM

MUSIC AT **AMHERST** SERIES

PROGRAM

Uncovered

String Quartet No. 1 “Calvary”

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004)

Allegro
Adagio
Allegro vivace

Five Folksongs in Counterpoint

Florence B. Price (1887-1953)

Calvary
Oh My Darlin’ Clementine
Drink to Me With Thine Own Eyes
Shortnin’ Bread
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Intermission

Quintet in F# minor for Clarinet and Strings, Op. 10

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

Allegro energico
Larghetto affettuoso
Scherzo
Finale

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Cameras and recording devices are strictly prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

Uncovered: The Music of Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, Florence B. Price, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Over the course of time there have been many overlooked composers in classical music, especially due of their race or gender. It is important to realize that we have not yet heard the entire story due to the sidelining of these musical voices. Composers like Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Florence Price, and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson have contributed beautifully crafted works to the repertoire, but are not widely celebrated. Quality recordings and performances of their music are rare or nonexistent. With *Uncovered*, we are helping to change this unfortunate reality, and bring these remarkable composers to a wider audience.

–Catalyst Quartet

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson

High on the list of musical creators who deserve to be better-known is Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson. Perkinson was named after another composer on today's program, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

According to Johann Buis, associate professor of musicology at Wheaton College, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor became something of a "cult figure" on the African-American classical-music scene. For much of the early 20th century, non-white classical musicians were largely segregated from the mainstream classical realm. But so revered was Coleridge-Taylor that choral societies named for him cropped up in major cities across the United States.

Perkinson's mother, who had moved from North Carolina and was a piano teacher and church organist in the Bronx, was clearly influenced by the popularity of the British musician, naming her son after him in 1932. Something of a piano prodigy, Perkinson soon demonstrated that his name was no fluke.

After graduating from New York's High School of Music and Art (later the LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts), where he befriended cellist and fellow student Lynn Harrell, Perkinson briefly studied education at New York University, and then transferred to the Manhattan School of Music. There he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees, pursuing composition with Vittorio Giannini and Hugh Ross.

While serving on the faculty of Brooklyn College from 1959-1962, he spent three summers studying conducting in the Netherlands with African-American expatriate Dean Dixon and Franco Ferrera, and then part of a summer at the Mozarteum in Salzburg.

Besides writing chamber and choral works and other concert music, and co-founding New York's Symphony of the New World in 1965, Perkinson extended his career in other directions as well. He worked as music director for several dance and theatrical companies, including Jerome Robbins' American Theater Lab and Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theater, composing a ballet for Ailey titled *For Bird, With Love*. He also wrote scores for several films, including *A Warm December* (1973), a romantic drama directed by and starring Sidney Poitier; toured with famed jazz drummer Max Roach, and did arrangements for popular singers such as Marvin Gaye and Harry Belafonte.

Some of these career choices were forced on "Perk," as he was known to friends, because of discrimination. Buis was an office-mate of the composer at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, where Perkinson worked from 1998 until his death in 2004. Perkinson served as coordinator of performance activities there in 1998 and, a year later, he became music director of the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble. Buis recalls a conversation in which Perkinson described getting a phone call from Dixon, who had seen him on Japanese television with Roach. Perkinson told Buis, "I could not really explain to Dean Dixon that no orchestra, no ensemble, no opportunities would come my way in the United States. The phone rang, and it was Max Roach on the line: 'Perk, I'm booked for a tour to Japan, and I need a pianist. Would you come?' His phone call came when I was broke and I needed to eat, and I went on this tour. The fact was that I did not or could not make headway in the United States, and when opportunities did come my way, and they discovered that I was Black, these opportunities were withdrawn or modified."

Although never a strict serialist, Perkinson was more forward-looking than better-known African-American counterparts like Florence Price and William Grant Still. His music falls into what Buis calls a kind of "in-between category," with a constant tension between the pull of atonality and a sophisticated, never faddish use of jazz idioms. "So here he is using a kind of modernistic language with a fairly strong image of dissonance, yet he also uses a jazz through-line that constantly informs a rhythmic vitality in his work that was extremely attractive," Buis said. In addition, Perkinson was a first-rate contrapuntalist, inspired by composers as diverse as Bach and Bartók, with an affinity for instrumental color, a quality particularly evident in his arrangements.

The *String Quartet No. 1* ranks among Perkinson's best-known chamber pieces. "This is a fascinating work, because it is subtitled with the name of a spiritual," Buis said. "He uses that tune as conceptional raw material but disguises it in a fascinating way." According to a Nov. 4, 1956, review in the *New York Times*, its premiere was given by the Cumbo Quartet at Carnegie Hall's Lyceum stage as part of a memorial tribute to H.T. "Harry" Burleigh, a noted African-American baritone and composer.

The critic, only credited with the initials J.S., was enthusiastic about the work: "Mr. Perkinson is an artist who has something to say. Although his idiom is unmistakably contemporary, it is not warmed-over atonality of the Viennese school. Jazz idioms are used fluently and without self-consciousness. The quartet has great rhythmic vitality, an aspect in which contemporary music is often deficient."

Buis is convinced that Perkinson's star will rise as more listeners discover him: "Audiences are going to say, 'We need Black concert music 2.0. Where is it?' And Perkinson will be right there, absolutely."

(from *Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson on the cusp of a rediscovery* by Kyle MacMillan)

Florence B. Price

By the year 1935, Florence B. Price came to be known as the "Dean of Negro Composers of the Middlewest," an allusion to William Grant Still, who was called the "The Dean of American Negro Composers". The title was given to her by the *Chicago Defender* for her numerous professional accomplishments, but also, importantly, because she composed music with which African Americans could identify. Indeed, Price herself embraced her own heritage as a means of self-expression, and much of her composing is rooted in a Black folk idiom, delivered through studied European techniques.

Price's *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint for String Quartet*, written in 1951, are often confused with her *4 Negro Folksongs in Counterpoint for String Quartet* (c. 1947). The confusion is probably due to the fact that the *4 Negro Songs* have yet to be republished after being rediscovered in an abandoned house outside Chicago in 2009, in conjunction with the fact that Price originally named the five folksongs of 1951, *Five Negro Folksongs*, and changed the title twice before settling on the final title. This confusion has done a great disservice to the popularity of this quartet, which is an incredibly rich and electrifying work that has much to offer, but is scarcely known.

Florence B. Price was herself a participant in the Great Migration of Blacks in the early 20th century, escaping the violent racism of her native Little Rock, and moving to Chicago, where she became an important contributor in the great Chicago Renaissance between 1935 and 1950, regularly associating with icons Langston Hughes, Marion Anderson, and Margaret Bonds, and creating a body of work that spoke authentically to the American voice, while breaking down race, gender, and economic barriers. Her roots as a deeply religious southern Black woman are particularly on display in the *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint* and *4 Negro Folksongs*, and she uses the gravitas of the songs' spiritual motifs as building blocks for dramatic narratives, where the four voices of the quartet are conversing, interacting, commenting, and at times battling.

(from *Negro Folksongs in Counterpoint* note by Paul Laraia)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

“No one realises more than I that the coloured people have taken their place in the scheme of things, but to say that they never will is arrogant rubbish, and an insult to the God in Whom they profess to believe.”

—Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, 1912

When the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in London in 1875, the child of a white British mother and a Sierra Leonean doctor, slavery had yet to be abolished in Cuba and Brazil. Though the United Kingdom had officially outlawed slavery in 1834, it continued to profit considerably from the labor of enslaved people in the Americas. Meanwhile, in the United States, Reconstruction—the nation's attempt at racial democracy—was on the brink of collapse, about to be dealt its fatal blow by compromises made to settle the contested presidential election of 1876. If the time period sounds familiar at all, it ought to remind us that the legacies of the end of the 19th century are very much with us today, and that this is timely music. This was the world into which Coleridge-Taylor was born, a composer who was consistently curious, passionate, and optimistic about the lives of Black people in Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

The *Clarinet Quintet* comes from a time when Coleridge-Taylor was a student at the recently founded Royal College of Music in London. Coleridge-Taylor entered the school as a violin student in 1890 at the age of fifteen. After two years of study, he switched emphases, focusing on piano and, primarily, composition. The young Coleridge-Taylor admired the work of Brahms and Dvořák—influences evident in the *Clarinet Quintet*—and he had tremendous respect for his composition teacher, the Irish composer Charles Villiers Stanford,

professor also to Ralph Vaughan Williams, Rebecca Clarke, Frank Bridge, and Arthur Bliss.

The *Clarinet Quintet* (1895) was composed just before Coleridge-Taylor turned twenty years old. It is perhaps the best-known piece on the *Uncovered* album, and deserves to be much more widely known. In her book about her father, Coleridge-Taylor's daughter Avril recounts that, at a student concert in 1894, the director of the college, George Grove said that Coleridge-Taylor would not be able to write a successful slow movement until he had been in love. The listener cannot help but infer that he indeed must have fallen in love before writing the impactful *Larghetto affettuoso* of the *Clarinet Quintet*, with its twinkling and hopeful final chords.

After his student years, Coleridge-Taylor's works demonstrated an increasing investment in understanding and supporting Black people throughout the African diaspora. Coleridge-Taylor was always curious about the Americas, particularly the United States. Perhaps his most famous piece is the trilogy of cantatas known as *The Song of Hiawatha* (1900), based on the epic poem of the same name by US American writer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Coleridge-Taylor met the Black US American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar in London in 1896, setting some of his poems to music and later collaborating with him on the operetta *Dream Lovers* (1898). In 1901, Coleridge-Taylor wrote the symphonic poem *Toussaint Louverture* in honor of the Haitian revolutionary leader. Before his first trip to the United States, in 1904, Coleridge-Taylor prepared himself by reading *The Souls of Black Folk* by preeminent sociologist and Black intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois, calling it the best book he had ever read. During that trip, he met and had a lengthy conversation with US President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House.

Back in the UK, Coleridge-Taylor made a living as a prominent and successful composer, teacher, and conductor. He taught composition at the Guildhall School of Music and the Trinity College of Music and became the conductor of the Handel Society of London in 1904. He married the pianist Jessie Sarah Fleetwood Walmisley in 1899, and had two children, Hiawatha and Avril. He visited the United States twice more, in 1906 and 1910, traveling to Detroit, Boston, and New York, and performing with famed Black US American singer and composer Harry Burleigh. Coleridge-Taylor died suddenly of pneumonia in 1912, just after turning thirty-seven.

(Note adapted from Matthew Leslie Santana)

Uncovered

Perhaps you are reading this after all three works have been performed, and you are reflecting upon what you just heard. If so, you may notice that, like all the composers on tonight's program, the *Uncovered* series should be placed in its own historical moment—one in which concert music institutions are grappling with how to reckon with their own relationships to white supremacy. This process intensified in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in May 2020.

In their conception of this “Uncovered” series, the Catalyst Quartet rightly notes that concert works by Black people and women have suffered from a dearth of live and recorded performances. As composer and musicologist George Lewis put it recently, there has been a “cone of silence” over the works of Black composers, and our current moment has dedicated a lot of ink, and generated a lot of concert programs discussing, and attempting to lift, that cone. Music critic Joshua Barone rightly asks, however, whether that rush will last, and indeed a quick search through old music periodicals and concert programs shows that related trends have arisen at various moments over the past several decades without being able to undo classical music's investments in works by white men from Western Europe.

Nevertheless, there have always been and hopefully will always be artists who seek to use their performance capabilities and platforms to ask critical questions of the canon and the institutions that prop it up. The Catalyst Quartet is among those artists, as are their collaborators, the clarinetist Anthony McGill and pianist Stewart Goodyear. (Goodyear performs on the next M@A Series concert, on March 25, 2022).

The Catalyst Quartet has long been a champion of living composers, especially women, Black and Indigenous people, and other people of color. Anthony McGill memorably took to Facebook two days after the murder of George Floyd to perform a version of “America the Beautiful” that shifts to the minor mode halfway through, and ends on the penultimate note of the tune before McGill takes two knees in front of the camera. Regardless of the future of classical music, we have in these artists interpreters and keepers of the vast trove of music by marginalized composers that is ready to be uncovered.

(Note adapted from Matthew Leslie Santana)

THE ARTISTS

Catalyst String Quartet

Karla Donehew-Perez, violin Abi Fayette, violin
Paul Laraia, viola Karlos Rodriguez, cello

“Like all great chamber groups, the Catalyst Quartet is beautiful to watch, like a family in lively conversation at the dinner table: anticipating, interrupting, changing subjects.”

New York Times - August 5, 2020

Hailed by *The New York Times* at its Carnegie Hall debut as “invariably energetic and finely burnished... playing with earthy vigor,” in 2020 the Grammy Award-winning Catalyst Quartet celebrated the 10th Anniversary of its founding by the Sphinx Competition. The ensemble believes in the unity that can be achieved through music, and imagines its programs and projects with this in mind, redefining and reimagining the classical music experience.

Catalyst Quartet has toured widely throughout the United States and abroad, including sold-out performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., at Chicago’s Harris Theater, Miami’s New World Center, and Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall in New York City. The Quartet has guested with the Cincinnati Symphony, New Haven Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, and it’s players have served as principal players and featured ensemble with the Sphinx Virtuosi on six national tours. They have been invited to perform by prominent music festivals ranging from Mainly Mozart in San Diego, to the Sitka Music Festival and Juneau Jazz and Classics in Alaska, and the Grand Canyon Music Festival, where they appear annually. Catalyst Quartet was ensemble-in-residence at the Vail Dance Festival in 2016. In 2014, they opened the Festival del Sole in Napa, California with Joshua Bell, and participated in England’s Aldeburgh Music Foundation String Quartet Residency with two performances in the Jubilee Hall.

Recent seasons have brought international engagements in Russia, South Korea, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia and Puerto Rico, along with regular tours throughout the United States. Resident in New York City, the ensemble has performed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, City Center, Columbia University’s Miller Theatre, The New School (for Schneider Concerts), and Lincoln Center. Catalyst Quartet played six concerts with jazz vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant for Jazz at Lincoln Center. The subsequent recording won the 2018 Grammy Award for Best Jazz Vocal Album. Catalyst Quartet launched its own New York series CQ@Howl in 2018.

Recent collaborations include *Encuentros*, a program with cellist Gabriel Cabezas with the premiere of a new work by Cuban composer Jorge Amado Molina; *(im)igration* with the Imani Winds; and *CQ Minute*, 10 miniature string quartets commissioned for the quartet's 10th anniversary, with works by Andy Akiho, Kishi Bashi, Billy Childs, Paquito D'Rivera, Tania Leon, Jessie Montgomery, Kevin Puts, Caroline Shaw, Joan Tower, and a to-be-named composer selected from a national call for scores. Catalyst Quartet's latest project is *Uncovered*, a multi-volume series of recordings for Azica Records celebrating beautifully crafted works by composers overlooked and sidelined because of their race or gender. Volume 1, released in February 2021 with clarinetist Anthony McGill and pianist Stewart Goodyear, includes the string quartet and quintets of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Forthcoming releases will feature music of Florence Price, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, William Grant Still, and George Walker, among others.

Catalyst Quartet's recordings span the ensemble's scope of interests and artistry. Its debut album, *The Bach/Gould Project*, features the Quartet's own arrangement of J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* paired with Glenn Gould's *String Quartet Op. 1. Strum* is the solo debut album of composer Jessie Montgomery, former Catalyst Quartet violinist. *Bandaneon y cuerdas* features tango-inspired music for string quartet and *bandoneon* by JP Jofre, and *Dreams and Daggers* is their Grammy-winning album with Cecile McLorin Salvant.

Catalyst Quartet combines a serious commitment to diversity and education with a passion for contemporary works. The ensemble serves as principal faculty at the Sphinx Performance Academy at The Cleveland Institute of Music and Curtis Institute of Music. Catalyst Quartet's ongoing residencies include interactive performance presentations and workshops with Native American student composers at the Grand Canyon Music Festival and the Sphinx Organization's Overture program, which delivers access to music education in Detroit and Flint, Michigan. Past residencies have included concerts and masterclasses at the University of Michigan, University of Washington, Rice University, Houston's Society for the Performing Arts, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the Virginia Arts Festival, Pennsylvania State University, the In Harmony Project in England, the University of South Africa, and the Teatro De Bellas Artes in Cali, Colombia. The ensemble's residency in Havana, Cuba for the Cuban American Youth Orchestra in January 2019, was the first by an American string quartet since the revolution.

Catalyst Quartet members hold degrees from The Cleveland Institute of Music, The Juilliard School, The Curtis Institute of Music, and New England Conservatory. Catalyst Quartet is a Sphinx ensemble and proudly endorses Pirastro strings. Learn more at www.catalystquartet.com.

Members of the Catalyst Quartet

Karla Donehew Perez, violin

A founding member of the Catalyst Quartet, Karla Donehew Perez maintains a busy performance schedule throughout the United States and around the world. In addition to her work with the Catalyst Quartet, she has been a featured soloist with the Berkeley Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, Oakland East Bay Symphony, Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, Sphinx Symphony Orchestra, Sphinx Chamber Orchestra, and the New World Symphony. She has performed with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and collaborated with Joshua Bell, Zuill Bailey, Awadagin Pratt, Anthony McGill, Stewart Goodyear, Fredericka Von Stade, Garry Karr, and members of the Guarneri, Juilliard, and Takács quartets. Donehew Perez has been guest concertmaster at the Tucson Symphony and spent two years as a fellow at the New World Symphony, often as concertmaster or principal second violin.

Born in Puerto Rico, Donehew Perez began playing the violin at age three. She made her solo debut with the Puerto Rico Symphony when she was nine. After moving to California she studied with Anne Crowden of The Crowden School. She holds bachelor and master degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music where she studied with Paul Kantor, David Cerone, and William Preucil.

Donehew Perez performs on a violin made in 2013 by renowned German luthier Stefan Peter Grenier, supported in part by a Sphinx MPower Artist Grant, and a violin bow by Victor Fétique on loan from the Rachel Elizabeth Barton Foundation.

Abi Fayette, violin

Violinist Abi Fayette's performances have taken her all over the world, spanning the United States, Europe, and Asia. She is a member of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. As a chamber musician she has performed with Jonathan Biss, Brett Dean, Gary Hoffman, Kim Kashkashian, Ida Kavafian, Joseph Silverstein, Steven Tenenbom, Jörg Widmann, and Peter Wiley. She has performed at Kneisel Hall, Music from Angel Fire, The Taos School of Music, and the Marlboro Music Festival. She began appearing with the Catalyst Quartet during the 2019-20 season.

Raised in a musical family, her violin studies began at age three. She was enrolled in the Juilliard School's Pre-College Division and studied with Shirley Givens, Ann Setzer, Kyung-Wha Chung, and Joseph Silverstein. She holds a bachelor degree from The Curtis Institute of Music and a masters degree from the New England Conservatory. During the 2019-20 season, Fayette was a Community Artist fellow at the Curtis Institute of Music working in the Philadelphia School District on music education programs.

Abi performs on a violin made in 1860 by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume, generously on loan from Marlboro Music.

Paul Laraia, viola

Praised by *The Strad* for “eloquent” and “vibrant” playing, violist Paul Laraia enjoys a multifaceted career as soloist, chamber musician, and advocate for new music. He has appeared as soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, Nashville Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, at festivals including the Yellow Barn, Sarasota, Vail International Dance, Festival Del Sole, Incheon Music Hic Et Nunc!, Hong Kong Generation Next Arts, Sitka, Banff, Grand Canyon, and Cornell’s Mayfest. He has performed chamber music with Gil Shaham, Joshua Bell, Yo Yo Ma, Jörg Widmann, Vadim Repin, Edgar Meyer, Donald Weilerstein, Cho-lang Lin, Roger Tapping, Anthony Marwood, Daniel Phillips, and Paul Huang. Laraia recently recorded a solo debut album of Bach, Reger, Hindemith, and Henze for the White Pine label.

The New Jersey native first studied viola with Brynina Socolofsk, and later with Kim Kashkashian at the New England Conservatory of Music. He was First Prize Winner of the 2011 Sphinx Competition, and in 2019, won First Prize in the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition, under whose auspices he made his recital debut at Wigmore Hall in London in 2020.

Paul Laraia performs on a Hiroshi Iizuka viola in the ‘viola d’amore’ style, and a Belgian bow by Pierre Guillaume awarded by the Bishops Strings Shop in London.

Karlos Rodriguez, cello

A founding member of the Catalyst Quartet, Cuban-American cellist Karlos Rodriguez is a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, clinician, recording artist, writer, and administrator.

The winner of competitions and prizes, he has appeared at Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The New World Center, and Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center. Rodriguez has also been honored to work with numerous distinguished artists such as the Beaux Arts Trio, the American, Cavani, Cleveland, Emerson, Guarneri, Juilliard, Miami, Orion, Tokyo, and Vermeer String Quartets; Janos Starker, Lynn Harrell, Zuill Bailey, Pieter Wispelwey, Rachel Barton-Pine, Awadagin Pratt, Joshua Bell, Anthony McGill, Paul Neubauer, and Steven Isserlis.

A love of dance led to collaborations with the Thomas/Ortiz Dance Company, Freefall, Mark Morris Dance Group, Vail International

Dance Festival, and Chita Rivera. Rodriguez has attended and been a guest artist at the Encore School for Strings; the Sarasota, Strings, Aspen, Grand Canyon, Great Lakes, and Kneisel Hall chamber music festivals; the Cleveland Chamber Music Society, Philadelphia Orchestra Chamber Music Society, and Napa's Festival Del Sole.

As an educator, he is the Director of Artistic Affairs for the Sphinx Performance Academy at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Curtis Institute of Music, and the Juilliard School, and has given master classes domestically and abroad.

Rodriguez has worked on commercials and films, collaborated with pop artists such as Shakira, John Legend, and Pink Martini, and contributed to numerous Broadway musicals. He is a member of the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra and past principal cellist of the Florida Grand Opera Orchestra. Rodriguez is also the author of *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life-Music*, published by Intellect Books UK. His teachers have included Richard Aaron, Peter Wiley and David Soyer.

Karlos Rodriguez plays on a cello by award-winning luthier Michael Doran made possible through a Sphinx MPower Artist Grant

Guest artist Anthony McGill, clarinet

Hailed for his “trademark brilliance, penetrating sound and rich character” (*New York Times*), clarinetist Anthony McGill is one of classical music’s most recognizable and brilliantly multifaceted figures. In addition to his dynamic international solo and chamber music career, McGill is principal clarinet of the New York Philharmonic—the first African-American principal player in the organization’s history. In 2020, he was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize, one of classical music’s most significant awards given in recognition of soloists who represent the highest level of musical excellence. McGill was honored to take part in the inauguration of President Barack Obama, premiering a piece written for the occasion by John Williams and performing alongside violinist Itzhak Perlman, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and pianist Gabriela Montero.

He is a dedicated champion of new music: during the 2020/21 season, McGill performed “Peace,” by Jessie Montgomery; “Ad Anah?” by James Lee III; a new work from Benjamin J. Shirley; “Book of Days,” by Daron Hagen; and “From The Mountaintop,” written for McGill by Richard Danielpour.

In the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, McGill launched a powerful musical protest video urging people to #TakeTwoKnees in demonstration against the death of George Floyd and historic racial injustice. His video went viral, and hundreds of

artists and citizens amplified the message and responded to the protest with their own videos using the hashtag #TakeTwoKnees.

McGill appears regularly as a soloist with top orchestras around North America, including the New York Philharmonic, Metropolitan Opera, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and Kansas City Symphony.

As a chamber musician, McGill is a favorite collaborator of the Brentano, Daedalus, Guarneri, JACK, Miró, Pacifica, Shanghai, Takács, and Tokyo Quartets, as well as Emanuel Ax, Inon Barnatan, Gloria Chien, Yefim Bronfman, Gil Shaham, Midori, Mitsuko Uchida, and Lang Lang. He has toured with Musicians from Marlboro and regularly performs for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. Festival appearances include Tanglewood, Marlboro, Mainly Mozart, and Skaneateles, and the Music@Menlo, Santa Fe, and Seattle Chamber Music Festivals.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, McGill previously served as the principal clarinet of the Metropolitan Opera and associate principal clarinet of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. In demand as a teacher, he serves on the faculty of The Juilliard School, Curtis Institute of Music, and Bard College Conservatory of Music. In the fall of 2020, he was named Artist-in-Residence at the Cali School of Music at Montclair State University. In 2015, McGill recorded the Nielsen Clarinet Concerto together with Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic.

He and his brother, Demarre McGill, the Seattle Symphony Orchestra's principal flutist, joined the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras with conductor Allen Tinkham, to record *Winged Creatures*, an album of works for flute, clarinet, and orchestra including world-premiere recordings of duo concertos like the title track by African-American composer Michael Abels (Cedille Records). His *Portraits*, recorded with Demarre McGill and pianist Michael McHale, and Mozart and Brahms Clarinet Quintets, with the Pacifica Quartet, were both released on Cedille Records.

McGill has been covered in the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker* and has appeared on National Public Radio, Performance Today, and Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. He served as the 2015–16 Artist-in-Residence for WQXR. NBC Nightly News and CNBC have both aired stories highlighting the McGill brothers' inspirational story.

McGill is an ardent advocate for helping music education reach underserved communities and for addressing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in classical music. He is the Artistic Director for

the Music Advancement Program at The Juilliard School, a weekend program for music students who demonstrate a commitment to artistic excellence, which actively seeks students from diverse backgrounds under-represented in classical music.

This year, in concert with a \$30,000 charitable gift from the Avery Fisher Artist Program designated to a charity of McGill's choice, McGill and Weston Sprott, Dean of the Preparatory Division of The Juilliard School, established the Weston Sprott and Anthony McGill MAP Summer Scholarship Fund so MAP students can take part in summer programs and festivals.

McGill serves on the board of directors for the League of American Orchestras, Cedille Records, and the Harmony Program, and on the advisory councils for the Inter School Orchestras of New York and Time In Children's Arts Initiative. Anthony McGill is a Vandoren Artist and Buffet Crampon Artist. For additional background, please visit anthonymcgill.com.



Amherst College Music Department Upcoming Events

November 2021

- 6** **Senior Theses: William Fishell '21 and Elijah Quastler '21**
Buckley Recital Hall. 7 PM and 8:30 PM
- 12** **Amherst College Jazz Ensemble Homecoming Concert**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 13** **Amherst College Choral Society Homecoming Concert**
Buckley Recital Hall. 6 PM
- 13** **Amherst Symphony Orchestra (ASO) Homecoming Concert**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8:30 PM
- 15** **Senior Thesis: Seohyun Hong '22, Flute.**
Buckley Recital Hall. 4 PM

December 2021

- 3** **Amherst College Jazz Ensemble Concert (ACJE)**
Buckley Recital Hall. 8 PM
- 4** **Amherst Symphony Orchestra (ASO) Concert.** Buckley Recital
Hall. 8 PM
- 5** **Amherst College Choral Society Vespers.** Johnson Chapel.
Time TBD

Unless noted, all concerts held in Buckley Recital Hall

413.542.2195 / concerts@amherst.edu

Alisa Pearson, Manager of Concert Programing, Production and Publicity