

Minnesota Orchestra

André Raphael, conductor

Alan C. Page, narrator | Jevetta Steele, vocals

Malcolm-Jamal Warner, actor, musician and poet

Friday, June 23, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

Adolphus Hailstork	Three Spirituals	ca. 8'
	Everytime I Feel the Spirit Kum Ba Yah Oh Freedom	
Aaron Copland	Selections from Jevetta Steele, arranged by Tommy Barbarella	ca. 10'
	<i>Lincoln Portrait</i> Alan C. Page, narrator	
James P. Johnson	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
	<i>Drums—A Symphonic Poem</i>	
William Grant Still	Original spoken word piece by Malcolm-Jamal Warner	ca. 10'
	Symphony No. 1, <i>Afro-American</i>	
	Moderato assai – Allegro	ca. 24'
	Adagio	
	Animato	
	Lento, con risoluzione – Più mosso	

pre-concert	Pre-concert Performance by KNOWN MPLS, Courtland Pickens, conductor Friday, June 23, 7:15 pm, Target Atrium
thank you	These concerts are co-sponsored by Eric and Celita Levinson.

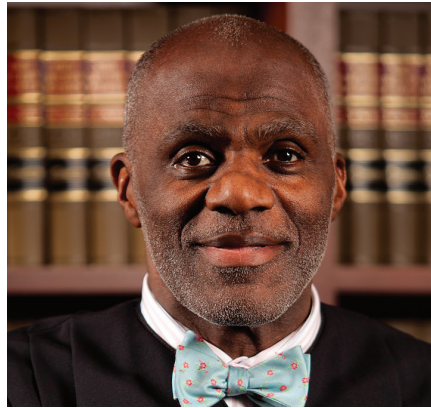
Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities. This concert will also be broadcast live on [Twin Cities PBS \(TPT-2\)](#) and available for streaming at minnesotaorchestra.org and on the Orchestra's social media channels.





André Raphael, conductor

Acclaimed for his creative programming and versatility, conductor André Raphael is renowned for his compelling musical performances. This week's concerts mark his first appearance with the Minnesota Orchestra since his 1993 debut. He has led concerts at critically acclaimed festivals, world premieres and commissioned works composed by Richard Danielpour, Jennifer Higdon, Kenneth Fuchs, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Uri Caine and Hannibal Lokumbe. He is conductor laureate of the West Virginia's Wheeling Symphony, an ensemble which he led as its music director for 15 years. He has served as assistant conductor at the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Saint Louis Symphony. This season, he makes his subscription series debut as a guest conductor with the Boston Symphony and appears with the Mobile Symphony, Youngstown Symphony, Hudson Valley Philharmonic and Greenwich Symphony. He has led several major American orchestras including those of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland and Philadelphia. Abroad he has appeared with the Auckland Philharmonia, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Columbia, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica, Bamberg Symphony, Neubrandenburger Philharmonie and Moravska Philharmonie. He holds a distinguished alumnus award from the University of Miami. More: andreraaphael.com.



Alan C. Page, narrator

Alan C. Page was elected to the Minnesota Supreme Court in 1992, becoming the first African-American on the court and one of the few associate justices ever to join initially through election, rather than appointment by the governor. He was re-elected in 1998, 2004 and 2010, and served until he reached mandatory retirement age in 2015. First known for his skills in football, Page was a first-round draft choice of the Minnesota Vikings in 1967, playing with the team until 1978. In 1971 he was named the NFL's Most Valuable Player, becoming only the second defensive player in history to be given that honor. He has since been inducted into both the College Football Hall of Fame and Pro Football Hall of Fame. Justice Page and his wife Diane founded the Page Education Foundation, which assists Minnesota students of color in their pursuit of post-secondary education. To date, the foundation has awarded over \$13 million in grants to more than 4,500 individuals. Justice Page and his daughter, Kamie Page, have written four children's picture books, most recently *Bee Love (Can Be Hard)* in 2020. In 2018 he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and in 2019 he was chosen as a member of the NFL's 100th Anniversary All-Time Team. More: page-ed.org.



Jevetta Steele, vocals

Jevetta Steele is a member of the internationally acclaimed musical family The Steeles, who have performed with the Minnesota Orchestra numerous times. She is most noted for her Academy Award-nominated performance of *Calling You* from the motion picture *Bagdad Café*, which was certified Gold in several European countries. She is an original cast member of the Broadway and national/international touring hit *The Gospel at Colonus*, a featured artist in the operas *Dear Mrs. Park* and *African Portraits*, a recipient of four Gold records and an author of two plays—the autobiographical musical *Two Queens*, *One Castle* and *Point of Review*; she served as a contributor for the latter play with Don Cheadle. Steele has recorded four albums while lending her voice to national artists like Prince, The Sounds of Blackness, Kirk Whalum, Natalie Merchant and Big Head Todd and the Monsters. She has added directing to her many talents on the music video *The Responz—Don't Stop* and the staged anthology *The Sound of Gospel* while continuing to perform in theatrical productions around the country. Her voice can also be heard on local and regional radio as well as television commercials. She currently serves as the interim choral director at Park Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. More: thesteelsmusic.com.



Malcolm-Jamal Warner, actor, musician and poet

Malcolm-Jamal Warner is an Emmy-nominated, Grammy Award-winning actor, poet, director and producer who has worked in television and film for more than 30 years. He first rose to fame for his role on the television series *The Cosby Show*, which earned him a Primetime Emmy nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series. He can currently be seen as cardio-thoracic surgeon AJ Austin on the medical drama *The Resident* and in the upcoming courtroom anthology series *Accused*. He has also appeared in various TV series including *Sneaky Pete*, *Major Crimes*, *American Horror Story: Freak Show* and *American Crime Story: The People vs. O.J. Simpson*, and in films such as *Fools Gold* and *Drop Zone*. He is a seasoned director, having directed episodes of several television series including *The Cosby Show* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, and his short film *This Old Man* received critical acclaim. He is also a poet and bass player, and his jazz-funk band Miles Long has performed in several major jazz festivals. He released his fourth album, *Hiding In Plain View*, in September 2022; it garnered him his second Grammy nomination for Best Spoken Word Poetry Album. More: malcolmjamalwarner.com.



William Eddins, broadcast host

For the June 23 concert, William Eddins serves as host and writer of the Twin Cities PBS broadcast and online livestream *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*. Eddins has a multifaceted musical career as a conductor and pianist. He is the music director emeritus of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, a former associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra and a frequent guest conductor of major orchestras throughout the world. In September 2022 he conducted the Orchestra's season opening concerts in a program that included the Minnesota premiere of Wynton Marsalis' *Swing Symphony*, performed with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. More: williameddins.com.



G. Phillip Shoultz, III, host

For the June 24 family concert, G. Phillip Shoultz, III, serves as onstage host. Shoultz enjoys a multifaceted career as

artist, educator, consultant, speaker and pastoral musician. He is the associate artistic director of VocalEssence, where his most visible impact is seen through his visionary leadership as founding conductor of the VocalEssence Singers Of This Age and through his engaging *Take 5 with GPS* daily livestream and series of instructional videos. He also serves Westwood Lutheran Church as Cantor for Music, Worship and the Arts, and he frequently appears throughout the U.S. as a guest clinician, adjudicator and consultant. In addition, he is an adjunct faculty member in the Graduate Music Education program at the University of St. Thomas. He has appeared as a conducting fellow with the Oregon Bach Festival, Chorus America, Choral Music Experience Institute and several other summer programs. More: vocalessence.org.



Terryann Nash, American Sign Language interpreter

Terryann Nash, MAPL, is an American Sign Language (ASL) performance artist and CEO of Nashinspired LLC. She has been an interpreter for productions of *The Miracle Worker*; *Sounds of Blackness' The Night Before Christmas* and *Songs for Martin*; *Black Nativity 2022*; and the 2017 National Day of Prayer. She has also been an ASL performing member in several performances by Sweet Honey in the Rock. She works closely with Nashinspired ASL consultant Rebecca Demmings. She interprets only the June 24 family concert.

JUNETEENTH: CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

This weekend's Minnesota Orchestra concerts are a celebration of Juneteenth, which takes place each June 19—a day that has long been celebrated as an occasion for healing and advocacy for Black Americans, but became recognized as a federal and Minnesota state holiday only recently. The origins of Juneteenth extend to America's Civil War. Although President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which was written in September 1862 and issued on January 1, 1863, proclaimed the freedom of enslaved people in the rebelling states, its full enforcement was slow and inconsistent during the war and its immediate aftermath.

History records that on June 19, 1865, Union troops led by Army General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced the end of slavery in Texas, the last former Confederate state where the practice was widespread. Each subsequent June 19 has been celebrated as a holiday commemorating African American Emancipation. A long process of advocacy for Juneteenth to be recognized as an official national holiday came to fruition in June 2021 with the passage and signing of the federal Juneteenth National Independence Day Act. This past February, Minnesota also passed legislation recognizing Juneteenth as an official state holiday.

With this concert, the Minnesota Orchestra is proud to initiate an annual musical tradition at Orchestra Hall marking this important holiday with a program of music primarily by Black composers of the past and present.



Adolphus Hailstork

Born: April 17, 1941,
Rochester, New York

Three Spirituals

Composed: 2005

dr. Adolphus Hailstork has had a strong bond with music since he began learning the piano during childhood. He ultimately earned four degrees in music and composition at Howard University, the Manhattan School of Music and Michigan State University. Today, he lives in Virginia Beach and is an Eminent Scholar and professor emeritus at Old Dominion

University. His catalog now includes more than 100 compositions for chamber ensemble, chorus, orchestra and solo instruments—and it is continuing to expand in the composer's 80s, with recently published works including his Fourth Symphony and *A Knee on the Neck*, a choral-orchestral tribute to George Floyd, which was premiered by the National Philharmonic in May 2022.

"the foundation of our music"

In an extensive interview with composer advocate Frank J. Oteri of New Music USA in July 2021, Hailstork touched on the significant role African American spirituals played in both his personal life and his musical education. "When I was at Howard, the spirituals were, even those days, around the late '50s, passed on by word of mouth," he reminisced. "You sat in the choir, and you learned the spirituals from the people who were sitting around you, who had been in the choir already three years or four years....I happen to think the spirituals are the foundation of our music." His *Three Spirituals* for orchestra, composed in 2005, casts a spotlight on three pieces from this vast and proud tradition.

the music: joyful celebrations

Everytime I Feel the Spirit. By creating a conversation between full orchestra and sections or individual musicians, Hailstork expresses the joyful celebrations and powerful emotions from which this spiritual emerged. After an exciting orchestral opening, the main theme is played first by the trumpets and then transformed into a songful statement by solo bassoon, followed later by solo horn. In between, the strings and winds present an exuberant refrain.

Kum Ba Yah. The origin of this spiritual and its unusual title were debated for many years. However, in 2019, a *New York Times* story shared the news that the spiritual had been officially attributed to the Gullah Geechee community in southeastern Georgia. The original lyrics likely communicated the phrase "Come by here, my Lord," but it is believed that the words shifted over time as the spiritual was passed through generations, ultimately evolving into what is now *kumbaya* or *kum ba yah*. Hailstork's version of this beloved spiritual is pure and simple in the most profound way, featuring lyrical solos by both English horn and clarinet with gentle string chords supporting each soloist.

Oh Freedom. *Oh Freedom* was born out of a Civil War-era spiritual, *Before I'd Be a Slave*, becoming an influential song of hope for all African Americans across the country at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and continuing long after the end of the war. The music saw a resurgence during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, with a notable performance at the 1963 March on Washington, at which Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. In Hailstork's orchestral interpretation of *Oh Freedom*, the brass section is the focus of

the blues-inspired main theme, while the full orchestra sound is bright, confident and celebratory from start to finish.

Program note by **Emma Plehal**.

Selections from Jevetta Steele

arr. **Tommy Barbarella**

Premiering: June 23, 2023

This performance features music arranged for the occasion: pianist, keyboard player and composer Tommy Barbarella has arranged selections for vocalist Jevetta Steele, whose background is detailed on page 40. Barbarella has collaborated with the Minnesota Orchestra on numerous projects for more than a decade. He worked extensively with Prince as a member of the New Power Generation and arranged *Purple Rain* for the Orchestra's 2016 performance at the Minnesota Vikings home opener game.

meaningful medleys

The medleys performed by Steele include selections from the following works.

My Country 'Tis of Thee. Throughout U.S. history, our country has had a number of unofficial national anthems. Among the earliest was *My Country 'Tis of Thee*. Theology student Samuel Francis Smith had repurposed the melody from a German song, *God Bless Our Native Land*, which is more commonly recognized as the British national anthem *God Save the King*, to create a new patriotic anthem whose text speaks to the history of the United States. The full origin story of the music itself is still debated today.

Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing. In the early 20th century, civil rights leader and writer James Weldon Johnson collaborated often with his brother J. Rosamond Johnson, a composer and singer, to create musical theater and opera music together. Their greatest success in this endeavor was *Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing*, which was first composed for an event honoring Booker T. Washington. It was used as an important anthem during the Civil Rights Movement and has been recognized by the NAACP as the Black National Anthem for more than 100 years.

Oh Freedom. *Oh Freedom* (or *Before I'd Be a Slave*) became an inspiration to many Black Americans during the post-Civil War years and throughout the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s. It has seen many prominent performances and recordings by artists including Odetta, Harry Belafonte and Joan Baez.

America the Beautiful. Featuring text first written by poet Katharine Lee Bates in 1895, set to music by Samuel Augustus

Ward—music originally written for a different hymn altogether—*America the Beautiful* explores patriotism from the perspective of a traveler seeing the sights across the country. Bates' text highlights the unique beauty and diversity of the natural land on which the United States was built.

I'll Take You There. *I'll Take You There* was first performed by the Staple Singers, one of the most famous gospel/soul/R&B bands in American history. This protest song, filled with positive and hopeful messages, was first released in 1972 and remained near the top of the Billboard charts for more than 15 weeks.

Love Train. In 1972, during the height of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, Philadelphia soul band O'Jays introduced their newest song, *Love Train*, a musical call for unity and peace around the world. The lyrics were written by producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff.

Program note by **Emma Plehal**.



Aaron Copland

Born: November 14, 1900,
Brooklyn, New York

Died: December 2, 1990,
Sleepy Hollow, New York

Lincoln Portrait

Premiered: May 14, 1942

On December 18, 1941, just 11 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor that pulled the United States into World War II, conductor André Kostelanetz sent letters to Aaron Copland and two other American composers, proposing a commission to create a “musical portrait gallery of great Americans.” Copland's first choice was Walt Whitman, but since one of the other composers, Jerome Kern, had already picked a writer (Mark Twain), Kostelanetz requested that Copland choose a statesman instead. The composer obliged, writing a piece for narrator and orchestra honoring America's 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. Kostelanetz led the premiere with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra on May 14, 1942, with William Adams narrating.

In preparing to write *Lincoln Portrait*, Copland later said he was “skeptical about expressing patriotism in music; it is difficult to achieve without becoming maudlin or bombastic, or both.” To avoid these common tropes, he incorporated five spoken excerpts from Lincoln's speeches and writings in the work's second half,

drawing “a simple but impressive frame around the words of Lincoln himself—in my opinion among the best this nation has ever heard to express patriotism and humanity.” *Lincoln Portrait* also includes quotations of another kind: melodic fragments from two folk tunes popular in Lincoln’s time.

The patriotism that swept the U.S. during the war years ensured *Lincoln Portrait*’s immediate popularity, but even Copland was surprised at its enduring place in the musical repertoire. “I never expected it to be performed frequently,” he said. But *Lincoln Portrait* has become one of Copland’s most-performed works, familiar to generations of audiences at patriotic occasions. The narration has been delivered by many celebrities and political figures, including Barack Obama, who read the part with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2005 in a performance led by William Eddins, a former associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra who is the broadcast host of the June 23 Juneteenth concert. Copland himself conducted the work with the Minnesota Orchestra in 1975. Retired Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan C. Page narrated it with the Orchestra in November 2016 and reprises that role this weekend.

words and music, rich with symbolism

The first half of *Lincoln Portrait* is purely instrumental, while in the latter half, the speaker enters and the orchestra adopts a supportive role. The piece opens a simple melodic idea, distinguished by a recurring double-dotted rhythm, that suggests solemnity and steadfast determination—motives equally apt in Lincoln’s 1860s and Copland’s 1940s. The first of two American folk songs Copland incorporates is “Springfield Mountain,” a ballad about a young soldier from Springfield Mountain, Massachusetts, who died of a snakebite. Using this melody to eulogize Lincoln is appropriate on several levels: Lincoln’s life was also cut short, and he too had lived in a town called Springfield. The other borrowed melodic material, which appears in the boisterous middle segment, is based loosely on the well-known song “Camptown Races.”

The concluding section includes five spoken Lincoln quotations—words from an 1858 debate with Stephen Douglas, the 1862 State of the Union Address, the 1863 Gettysburg Address and private writings published after the President’s death. Copland sequenced them to establish grave historical circumstances, to outline the righteousness of the American cause, and finally to proclaim inevitable victory. In concluding with a quotation from Lincoln’s most famous speech, the Gettysburg Address, the piece gives strong emphasis to history’s lesson that America has survived dark moments before—a message that has resonated throughout all of our country’s uncertain times.

Program note by **Carl Schroeder**.



James P. Johnson

Born: February 1, 1894,
New Brunswick, New Jersey
Died: November 17, 1955,
New York City

Drums—A Symphonic Poem
Composed: 1932

The 1920s were such lively years in the American musical scene—with artistic innovations coinciding with rapid technological ones—that the entire post-war, pre-Depression period was given the moniker the Jazz Age. In this era that was defined in part by its music, few songs were more influential and popular than James Price Johnson’s “The Charleston,” the 1923 Broadway showtune that brought the Charleston dance to the mainstream.

Although his name isn’t as famous as his most popular music, Johnson played a key part in the Jazz Age and Harlem Renaissance, with his crucial contributions including pioneering the influential Harlem Stride Piano style, composing music for more than 40 musicals and, in 1921, performing what is acknowledged as the first recorded jazz piano solo. As his career progressed, he became increasingly dedicated to melding African American music with symphonic forms, with his eventual output including two symphonies, concertos for piano and clarinet, two ballets, a pair of one-act operas and smaller-form works such as sonatas, suites, tone poems and one string quartet. His active and influential career was cut short by a stroke in 1951 that left him paralyzed.

Johnson’s symphonic works didn’t attain the success of his most popular stage works, but his biographer Scott E. Brown notes that they “reflect the honest intensions of a craftsman steeped in the gamut of American musical form, who produced accessible expressions of ethnic pride, expansive aspirations and personal experience.”

the composer’s description

Johnson’s *Drums—A Symphonic Poem* stems from music introduced in his 1932 stage production *Harlem Hotcha*. The composer provided this description of the music:

“32 bars of solo drums played by timpani announces or sets the atmosphere and rhythm for a female dancer, after which begins an imaginary dance accompanied by the whole orchestra which gives out the dance motive for two bars and is answered by an orchestrated figure depicting the stamping and shouting of the

other participants. Then follows a faster and swifter tempo and dance by the other members of the group. This is developed to the solo announcement of the drums again. Then follows the song of Africa and the drums. After this there is a flute solo accompanied by bass violin and tom toms alone depicting the voodoo dance, and from here the composition is developed to a grand climax which combines all the themes and drum rhythms with one final announcement of the theme by the orchestra in one triumphant and savage shout and the end."

Program note by **Carl Schroeder**.



William Grant Still

Born: May 11, 1895,
Woodville, Mississippi
Died: December 3, 1978,
Los Angeles, California

Symphony No. 1, *Afro-American*

Premiered: October 29, 1931

William Grant Still was referred to by his musical contemporaries as the "Dean of African American composers," but it was a title that left him with mixed emotions. Though Still had a passion to communicate Black American experiences and musical traditions through his compositions, he also deeply desired respect as a successful American artist without the constant attention or comparison regarding his race within a predominantly white industry. Yet, when Still's Symphony No. 1, *Afro-American*, received its world premiere in 1930, in a performance by the Rochester Philharmonic under the direction of Howard Hanson, it marked the first time that a major American orchestra had ever performed a symphony by a Black American composer. This was just one among many barrier-breaking accomplishments during his incredible career.

infused with blues—and poetry

Still grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he excelled at learning musical instruments, most notably cello and oboe (both are heavily featured in the First Symphony). He studied composition and conducting at several schools including Wilberforce University, Oberlin College and the New England Conservatory. His most influential education, however, happened outside of the college classroom. French composer Edgard Varèse took Still under his wing for composition lessons that helped his music reach the stages of major orchestras around the world. In addition, Still's freelance career led him to arrange music for the

band of W.C. Handy, the self-described King of the Blues. Inspired by Handy's artistry and determined to raise the status of the blues within the classical music genre, Still set out to infuse his own symphony with blues traditions from the first note to the last.

Prominent Black American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, just two decades Still's senior, was born to parents who had been enslaved prior to his birth, and he worked closely with Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington to use writing as a tool for civil rights activism. In the first pages of the score for *Afro-American Symphony*, Still references four of Dunbar's poems, each corresponding to one of the symphony's four movements. The individual movement titles included below, however, are not printed in the score for Still's Symphony. Rather, they were pulled from the composer's notebook, in which he drafted much of this symphony along with sketches for an opera that he never completed. These descriptive titles are often used in conjunction with performances of the work today.

the symphony in brief

longing (moderato assai-allegro). Symphony No. 1 opens with a plaintive English horn solo, followed by muted trumpet. A laid-back blues progression sneaks in seamlessly along with the trumpet solo as other woodwinds start to layer into the texture, most notably solo clarinet. As the themes develop, Still creates what seems to be a collection of sweet memories and hopeful desires, a "longing" perhaps, for a time filled with wholehearted moments and memorable people.

sorrow (adagio). The second movement showcases stirring melodies that stem directly from African American spirituals. Still's use of the rich, lyrical qualities of the string section and soulful solo lines played by various winds and brass instruments make this movement a reflection of a deeply rooted, powerful history.

humor (animato). Still's third movement takes a quick turn into a place of high energy, featuring the distinctive twang of a banjo. Contrasting styles of staccatissimo—where notes are extremely short and detached from one another—and tenuto—held or sustained notes—give this movement unexpected bursts of character. "An' we'll shout ouah halleluyahs," Dunbar's text jubilantly exclaims, "On dat mighty reck'nin' day."

aspiration (lento, con risoluzione-piu mosso). The final movement is deeply spiritual, both in its inspiration and in its expression. Descriptions in the score ask for the winds to play "organ-like" and the strings "sonorously." Midway through, the cello section sings out a stunning melody, supported by strings, flutes and harp. A thrilling race to the finish is bold and triumphant.

Program note by **Emma Plehal**.