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About the Show

Modesto Symphony Orchestra Association

Mozart Requiem

Friday, May 12, 2023, 7:30 pm

Saturday, May 13, 2023, 7:30 pm

Gallo Center for the Arts, Mary Stuart Rogers Theater

Anthony Parnter, *conductor*

MSO Chorus, Daniel R. Afonso Jr., *chorus director*

Jennifer Lindsay, *soprano*

Maria Dominique Lopez, *mezzo-soprano*

Orson Van Gay, II, *tenor*

Zachary Gordin, *baritone*

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Requiem, K. 626 (1791)

MSO Chorus

Daniel R. Afonso Jr., *chorus director*

Jennifer Lindsay, *soprano*

Maria Dominique Lopez, *mezzo soprano*

Orson Van Gay II, *tenor*

Zachary Gordin, *baritone*

INTERMISSION

Florence Price (1887-1953)



Mozart Requiem

The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart
to the Stage!

Symphony No. 3 in C minor (1938)

- I. Andante
- II. Andante ma non troppo
- III. Juba: Allegro
- IV. Scherzo: Finale

Roster

Orchestra Roster

Anthony Parnter, conductor

Violin 1

Ilana Blumberg, *concertmaster*
Calvin Lewis, *associate concertmaster*
Dana Myers, *assistant concertmaster*
Kirstan Hilton
Valerie Tisdel
Mark Neyshloss
Milka Krалеva-Castro
Gabrielle Wunsch
Matthew Oshida
Sergi Goldman-Hull
Isabella Amador
Josepha Fath

Violin 2

Ani Bukujian, *principal*
Aya Kiyonaga, *assistant principal*
Juan Carlos Gutierrez
Donald Grishaw
Josephine Gray
Donna Harrison
Gyongyver Petheo
Asuka Yanai
Thomas Yee
Susan Doering
Bogdana Mindov

Viola

Kathryn Juneau, *principal*
Evan Buttemer, *assistant principal*
Thomas Elliott
Colin Belisle
Lisa Ponton



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Anne Martin
Nathan Yamamoto
Alessandra Aquilanti
Nancy Ewing

Cello

Janet Witharm, *principal*
Farley Pierce, *assistant principal*
Daniel Davies
Hannah Harrington
Paul Hale
Dieter Wulfhorst
Andrew Ford
Joan Hadeishi

Bass

Raymond Vargas, *principal*
Michel Taddei, *assistant principal*
Michael Minor
Harrison Dearman
Kody Thiessen
Zachary Iscoff

Flute

Johanna Borenstein, *principal*
Debra Dix
Gail Edwards, piccolo
Brittany Trotter, piccolo

Oboe

Robert Walker, *principal*
Anqi Zhou

English Horn

Laura Arganbright

Clarinet

Rob Patterson, *principal, basset horn*
Rebecca Tobin
Barret Ham, *basset horn, bass clarinet*

Bassoon



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Jeff Robinson, *principal*
Carolyn Lockhart

Horn

James Thatcher, *principal*
Beth Zare
Sarah Ference
William Harrington

Trumpet

John King, *principal*
William Harvey
John Freeman

Trombone

Bruce Chrisp, *principal*
Don Benham

Bass Trombone

Timothy Grabow

Tuba

Forrest Byram, *principal*

Timpani

John Weeks, *principal*

Percussion

Joseph Runnels, *principal*
Kumiko Ito
Kevin Neuhoff
Tim Dent
Beverly Dorcy

Harp

Molly Langr, *principal*

Organ/Celeste

Kathryn Eames, *principal*

Roster as of 05/09/2023



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The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart
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MSO Chorus Roster

Daniel R. Afonso Jr., chorus director

Lisa Battista, *accompanist*

Soprano

Samantha Alipio
Julie Bartlett
Tiffany Baxter
Sarah Beekman
Janet Betcher
Joan Corwin
Annette Dawson
Peggy Denny
Dee Ann Dutter
Meghan Fox
Chelsea Foy
Sarah Harrell-Kline
Christie Hart
Lisa Highiet
Donna Holloway
Nicole Ibrahim
Ranelle Johnson
Tracy Kempf
Linda Knoll
Kim Kunkel
Sarah Lindbergh-Lewis
Elizabeth Melville
Lauren Moraca
Karen Odell
Kathryn Sargent
Alice Schemmel
Carrie Silva
Sheri Stambaugh*
Megawati Tanudjaja
Dawn Thomas
Ruth Valencia
Jennifer Ward
Sharon Wilson

Alto

Miriam Bermann
Reva Burchett
Carrie Grover
April Hejka-Ekins
Kali Linn
Jessica Lopez



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Lisa Rae
Lyn Raible
Karin Reenstierna*
Belinda Rollicheck
Roodabeh Samimi
Susan Sanders
Lisa Sarasqueta
Linda Scheller
Nancy Silva
Melanie Speakman
Carla Strong
Loretta Sutherland
Linda Swartz
Lisa Traugher
Hennie Van Konynenburg
Polly Vasché
Gay Walker
Barbara Wesley

Tenor

Jim Beggs*
Michael Cash
Kwei-Cee Chu
Matthew Hanham
Matthew Long
Steve Matthews
Bruce Merchant
David Messamer
Marcial Salvador
Jim Sterling

Bass

Jeff Casey
Devin Champeaux
Giancarlos Delgado-Braun
Rick Dewar
Larry Dorman
Victor Haglund
David Hosmer
Mike Larson
Carl Morris
Jonathan Pizzo
Dieter Renning
Kevin Ringsby
Norman VanSpronsen*
Burt Vasché^



Mozart Requiem

The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart
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* Section Leader
^ Chorus Manager

Special thanks to Trinity United Presbyterian Church for providing rehearsal space for the MSO Chorus

Roster as of 5/03/23

Artist Biographies



Anthony Parnter

conductor

American conductor, Anthony Parnter, is the Music Director and Conductor of the San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra and the Southeast Symphony & Chorus in Los Angeles.

Recent guest conducting engagements include the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Opera, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, Jacaranda - Music at the Edge, Hear Now Music Festival, Mann Center Festival Orchestra, Pittsburgh Microtonal Festival, Hollywood Chamber Orchestra, Brightwork NewMusic, and the World Opera Forum in Madrid, Spain.

Over the next season, Anthony will premiere Kris Bower's Concerto for Horn with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Tamar-kali Brown's Oratorio "We Hold These Truths" with the Los Angeles Opera, work alongside composer Anthony Davis on his Pulitzer Prize-winning opera Central Park Five with the Long Beach Opera, and premiere a new work for narrator and orchestra by Oscar-winning, GRAMMY-nominated Jon Batiste, host of The Late Show with Stephen Colbert with the Gateways Festival Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

Anthony has led the Hollywood Studio Symphony in recording sessions for many international feature film and television projects including *Star Wars: The Mandalorian*, *Tenet*, *Star Wars: Book of Boba Fett*, *Little*, *American Dad*, *The Hunt*,



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Fargo, The Way Back, The Night Of, Ghostbusters: Afterlife, Encanto, and Ice Age: Adventures of Buck Wild. His live orchestral concert appearances for e-sports titan League of Legends in Barcelona, Beijing, Seoul, and Los Angeles are among the most widely viewed symphonic concerts in the world, with live audiences of 50,000-75,000 spectators and a viewership that outpaces the World Series with approximately 100 million live streaming each League of Legends Finals Opening Ceremony concert.

Anthony has restored and performed orchestral works by Florence Price, Zenobia Powell Perry, Margaret Bonds, William Grant Still, Duke Ellington, and Samuel Coleridge Taylor. He has premiered and recorded works by Anthony Davis, George Walker, Errollyn Wallen, John Wineglass, Gary Powell Nash, Marian Harrison, Renee Baker, James Wilson, Phillip Herbert, Daniel Kidane, Chanda Dancy, and James Newton. In 2015, Anthony was profiled by Los Angeles' KCET/TV as a "Local Hero" for his extensive community outreach and advocacy for the performance of works by Black, Latino, and Women artists.

Anthony studied music performance at Northwestern University and continued his musical studies at Yale University where he studied orchestral conducting with Lawrence Leighton Smith and Otto Werner Mueller. He resides in Los Angeles.



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Jennifer Lindsay

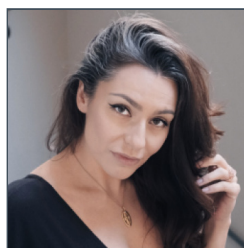
soprano

Lyric soprano Jennifer Lindsay has been widely praised for her gorgeous tone and musical intelligence. As Mimì in *La Bohème* with Opera Connecticut, she was lauded for her “plummy voice” by the Connecticut Town Times, and VOICE Magazine called her a “standout singer” for her portrayal of the pivotal character Mary Warren in Robert Ward’s *The Crucible* with Opera Santa Barbara. Ms Lindsay joined the Metropolitan Opera as a member of the ensemble in a new and wildly popular production of Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*, which received a

GRAMMY Award for Best Opera Recording. Equally at home in the contemporary music scene, Ms Lindsay has appeared with the LA Philharmonic in conjunction with Beth Morrison Projects to perform excerpts from John Adams' *I Was Looking At The Ceiling And Then I Saw The Sky*, conducted by the composer. She debuted the role of Lucha in the world premiere of HOPSCOTCH with The Industry, directed by Pulitzer Prize-nominee Yuval Sharon, and performed the role of Tasha in excerpts from Dylan Mattingly's modern opera *Stranger Love* at the biannual FIRST TAKE contemporary music festival co-hosted by The Industry and wildUp, Christopher Roundtree's acclaimed new music ensemble. Ms Lindsay has also been a featured soloist with the San Diego Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, and the Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra. She currently resides in Orange County.

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Maria Dominique Lopez

mezzo-soprano

Praised as “a rich-voiced mezzo” (Operawire) and “a real tour-de-force” (Splash Magazine), Mexican-American mezzo soprano Maria Dominique Lopez has sung operatic roles and symphonic works throughout the United States and Europe, in addition to recording vocals for independent films and major motion pictures (including Golden Globe and Academy Award Winning Disney/Pixar film, “Coco”). Recent stage appearances include Houston Grand Opera: Opera to Go!, Arizona Opera (Dritte Dame, Die Zauberflöte; Bonita, Arizona Lady), The Phoenix Symphony (mezzo soloist, Vaughan Williams' Magnificat), Resonance Works / Pittsburgh (Candelas, El Amor Brujo), Opera Memphis (Third Lady, The Magic Flute), Pacific Opera Project (Madam Flora, The Medium; Mercédes, Carmen; Masetta, La bohème), the world premiere at The Kennedy Center of Jenni Brandon's 3 Paderewskis (Ignace), the LA premiere of Mark Weiser's The Place Where You Started (Samantha), New Opera West (Cybil, Celka Ojakangas' Mirror Game; Jenny, Ben Stevenson's Recovered; Sara, Jeremy Rapaport-Stein's The Moose), Southeast Symphony (mezzo soloist, Mahler's Symphony No. 2), Angels Vocal Art (Principessa, Suor Angelica), Long Beach Opera (Mezzo Soloist, Ungala Series fundraiser), LA Opera Connects



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(Waitress/Angela, the world premiere of GG Gallegos' Another Perfect Day; Rosina, Eli and LeRoy Villanueva's Figaro's American Adventure), the mezzo soloist in James Newton's Mass presented by USC. Upcoming 2022 performances include a return to Resonance Works / Pittsburgh (Rosa, I Am a Dreamer Who No Longer Dreams), and as a soloist in LA Opera's collaboration with The Huntington Library. Maria lives in the Los Angeles area and owns her own reiki healing practice, Ascending Arts. In addition to reiki, Maria offers group reiki during every live music performance to all audience members who are open to receiving. Her goal is to help audience members tap into the healing that music offers by creating a quantum connection between the heart of the singer and the heart of the listener. She is a Senior Fellow in the Eric Fütterer Vocal Studio of Academy of Advanced Vocal Technique, and studies shamanic and energy practices with Shaman and Reiki Master, Jamie Jones.



Orson Van Gay, II

tenor

"Orson Van Gay II was an ardent Alfredo...his sound was fluent and his high notes golden." - Broadway World

Operatic Tenor, Orson Van Gay II, possesses a unique voice that captivates the audience with his charisma and command of the stage for a singer of his generation. His performances showcase vocal talents that have brought him constant recognition in Southern California and across the United States.

Recent and Upcoming: In the 2019-20 season, he created the role of Raymond Santana in the world premiére of Anthony Davis's *Central Park Five* (Pulitzer Winning Opera 2021) with Long Beach Opera and made his role debut as Rodolfo in *La bohème* with Pacific Opera Project. He was Nemorino with the Phoenicia Int. Festival of the Voice and sang the romantic lead of the Young Man in *Last Romance* with Kansas New Theater. Equally at home as a recitalist, Mr. Van Gay has appeared in the Portsmouth Community Concert, Inc. (VA), the Rio Hondo College and at Carnegie Hall in a recital with Wang Wei. **This**



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season included working with Maestro Conlon in a supporting role at LA Opera in their production of *Il trovatore* and with the LA Philharmonic in their preparation of *Fidelio*. He debuted as Danilo in Pocket Opera's *The Merry Widow*, followed by his debut as *The Athlete* in the West Coast premiere of, *I Can't Breathe* with Pacific Opera Project. He was Vitaliano in Long Beach Opera's *Guistino* with James Darrah directing; and reprised his role in *The Central Park Five* with Long Beach Opera in 2022. He reprised the role of Alfredo in *La traviata* with Piedmont Opera. Mr. Van Gay is the proud recipient of 2022 inaugural Hurst Artist of the year award.

Mr. Van Gay has sung extensively with the Los Angeles Opera in many venues including their "Connects", "City of Hope" "IAMLA, series. He debuted the role of Bernard Curson in the world premiè?re of *Figaro 90210* with the company and was Ramerrez in *The Prospector* in two different seasons. Other operatic roles include Alfredo (*La traviata*), Ben (*The Night of the Living Dead*) and the title roles of *Candide* and *Orpheus*.

He joined the Cal Philharmonic Orchestra in celebration of Leonard Bernstein's 100th anniversary and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* as tenor soloist at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Reviewed by George van Wagner he stated, "beautifully sung and strongly acted...audience members were visibly moved." He has sung the haunting role of Orlando in The Industry's nationally acclaimed production of *Hopscotch*. In addition to performing in the romantic and Germanic languages of opera, Mr. Van Gay was selected to perform in Mandarin last season making his debut with SINO U.S. Performing Arts Organization as tenor soloist for their concert series with performances in Los Angeles and Phoenix, Arizona.

He premiered *Golden*; a composition based on the life of Polish composer, Igancy Paderewski by Nathan Wang in Los Angeles and sang the role of Prince in the world premie?re of Ricky Ian Gordon's *Morning Star*.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Vocal Performance from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia and has been honored by the NATS organization in first place on several occasions.

As a native of southern California, Mr. Van Gay is also an actor in several nationally recognized television series. He has been featured in major television commercials and starred on a variety of shows for Netflix; including foreign film and television. He co-starred on the Disney series *Coop & Cami Ask the World*



Zachary Gordin

baritone

Praised for his “arresting musical insights” and a voice that is “commanding and intense without ever descending into coarseness” (*The Seattle Times*), Zachary Gordin has been active in many facets of the Classical Music industry. He has established himself as a leading baritone soloist, collaborative pianist, conductor, organizational consultant, and artist mentor; training singers who perform in the world's great opera houses and concert halls.

His debut disc: *Amour sans ailes - Songs of Reynaldo Hahn* on the MSR Classics label was named "Best Lieder Recording of 2017" by *Voix des Arts*. On the operatic stage Gordin is well known for his performances of Joseph De Rocher in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, a role that won him critical acclaim when he premiered it at Dayton Opera in 2015. Other major roles include Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas*, Enrico in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and Germont in *La traviata*. A veteran of the concert and recital stage, Gordin's recent engagements include performances with San Francisco Symphony, Oakland Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, YOSA Philharmonic, Bay Area Rainbow Symphony, Olympic Music Festival, and many others.

During his early childhood, he was inspired by his Great-Grandfather, an organist, and began training as a pianist at a young age. His commitment to education and access to the arts reinforces his work as General and Artistic Director of Festival Opera. He has served on the voice faculty of Sonoma State University and Santa Clara University, as a judge for regional and national voice competitions, and has given master classes at some of the country's most renowned opera companies and schools. Gordin is also widely recognized as a frequent presence on *Barihunks*, a site dedicated to physically fit and vocally gifted operatic baritones from around the globe.



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The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart
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Daniel R. Afonso Jr.

MSO Chorus Director

Daniel R. Afonso Jr. has served as conductor of the Modesto Symphony Orchestra Chorus since its foundation in 2001 and has prepared several choral works with the ensemble. He is also Coordinator of Vocal and Choral Studies at California State University, Stanislaus. Afonso received a B.M.E. degree from the Universidade do Rio de Janeiro (UNI -Rio), a M.M. degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and a D.M.A. degree in Choral Conducting and Pedagogy from the University of Iowa. Dr. Afonso is originally from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and has studied conducting with Carlos Alberto Figueiredo, Cees Rotteveel, Eph Ehly, and William Hatcher.

Dr. Afonso has performed with choral groups in Brazil, U.S., and Europe, and has previously taught music at the Conservatório Brasileiro de Música, Universidade do Rio de Janeiro (UNI-Rio), and Doane College, Nebraska. In 1988, he won the first prize and the best performance of Villa-Lobos work award at the Concurso Villa-Lobos de Canto Coral, a national choral competition sponsored by the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro. Dr. Afonso is strongly committed to the performance of new music and has commissioned and premiered many new choral works in the last few years, including several of his own works as well as works by young composition students. He had his New York debut in 2012, conducting Mozart's Requiem with members of the MSO Chorus and students from CSU Stanislaus at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

He is also a composer, arranger, and editor of choral music and has choral works published by earthsongs, Colla Voce, and Alliance Music Publications. He served as composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Choral Artists during their 2014-2015 season and has also written works for the Los Angeles Children's Choir, the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, and other ensembles in the US and abroad. He has written innumerable arrangements for the Modesto Symphony Orchestra, including a new version of The Star-Spangled Banner for chorus and orchestra, recently premiered at the



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opening concert for the 2015-16 concert season. Dr. Afonso is widely recognized for his research and performance of Brazilian choral music and continues to frequently present workshops and lectures about the Latin American choral repertoire.



MSO Chorus

Formed in 2001, the Modesto Symphony Chorus is a regional ensemble of singers of all ages and experience who share a commitment to performing concerts of the highest artistic quality and enhancing the appreciation and enjoyment of choral music among members and audiences alike. Under the skillful and inspiring direction of Dr. Daniel R. Afonso Jr., the MSO Chorus rehearses weekly and performs throughout the season with the Modesto Symphony Orchestra and also for additional community events.

Program Notes

Requiem, K. 626 (completed by Robert Levin)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Requiem, K. 626 (completed by Robert Levin)



Mozart Requiem

The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart
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Mozart Requiem

The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart
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Composer: born January 27, 1756, Salzburg, Austria; died December 5, 1791, Vienna

Work composed: 1791. Mozart died before completing the Requiem, an anonymous commission from Count Franz Walsegg von Stuppach. The Requiem was originally finished by one of Mozart's students, Franz Xaver Süssmayr. The version heard in these concerts was realized and completed by musicologist Robert Levin in 1991.

World premiere: Helmuth Rilling conducted the first performance of Levin's realization in August 1991 at the European Music Festival in Stuttgart.

Instrumentation: soprano, alto, tenor and bass soloists, SATB chorus, 2 bassoons, 2 basset horns (or clarinets), 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, organ, and strings

Estimated duration: 53 minutes

The mysterious circumstances surrounding Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Requiem* have lent the work an aura of romance and intrigue almost as compelling as the music itself. In the summer of 1791, Count Franz Walsegg von Stuppach sent a messenger to Mozart with an anonymous commission for a *Requiem* intended to honor Walsegg's late wife. Walsegg, an amateur musician, had a habit of commissioning works from well-known composers and then claiming them as his own, hence his need for anonymity and subterfuge. Chronically hard up, Mozart accepted the commission. He completed several sketches before putting the *Requiem* aside to finish *Die Zauberflöte* and *La Clemenza di Tito* and to oversee a production of *Don Giovanni*.

In October 1791, in failing health, Mozart returned to the *Requiem*. When Mozart died two months later, the *Requiem* remained unfinished. Mozart's wife, Constanze, facing a mountain of debt, asked one of Mozart's associates, Franz Xaver Süssmayr, to complete it. Süssmayr agreed, but his claims of authorship of the later movements of the *Requiem* have provoked sharp debates over which man wrote what, debates that continue today.

In 1991, musicologist Robert Levin presented his 'completed' version of the Requiem in which he corrected what he called Süssmayr's "errors in musical grammar." This version has become preferred by conductors and ensembles; since its premiere, there have been over 125 recordings of Levin's edition.



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The fine attention to detail in the meaning of the words of the requiem mass dictates the musical structure throughout. The chorus' heartfelt pleading in the opening lines, "Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine" (Grant them eternal rest, O God), are presented in a dark minor key. This is transformed into a promise of glowing eternity in the next sentence, "Et lux perpetua luceat eis" (and may perpetual light shine upon them) as the music moves into the light of a major key. The strong *Kyrie* (Lord, have mercy/Christ, have mercy) that follows is set in a stark fugue, Mozart's homage to J. S. Bach.

The *Sequence*, which is composed of a number of short movements, begins with the *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath), whose fiery, agitated setting and orchestral accompaniment bring the terror and fury of the text frighteningly alive. In the *Tuba mirum*, the bass soloist and a solo trombone proclaim the Day of Judgment, followed by each of the soloists in turn. The chorus returns to beg for salvation from hell in the powerful *Rex tremendae*, which is followed by the more intimate pleading of the *Recordare*, in which each of the soloists makes a personal petition to God. The gentleness of this movement is followed by the thunder of the *Confutatis*, which juxtaposes the images of the damned consigned to the flames of hell with that of the supplicant kneeling in prayer. Then comes the exquisite *Lacrymosa*, in which the chorus grieves and sobs; The sighing appoggiaturas of the violins echo the lamenting of the text. In the *Offertory*, the chorus ends its plea for mercy with a reminder of God's promise to Abraham; these words are set into a tremendous fugue, which recurs at the end of the graceful *Hostias*.

With the *Sanctus* comes the first wholly joyful expression of emotion, as the chorus and orchestra together sing God's praises with shining exclamations in the brasses and a fugue on the words "Hosanna in the highest." The operatic grace of the melody of the *Benedictus*, sung by the four soloists, conveys the sense of blessedness of those "who come in the name of the Lord;" this is followed by a recurrence of the choral fugue from the *Sanctus*. With the *Agnus Dei*, the chorus and orchestra return to the darkly shifting mood of the opening movement; this culminates in the *Communio*, which uses the music of the opening *Requiem aeternam* and concludes with the same fugue used in the *Kyrie*, but this time on the words "cum sanctis tuis in aeternam" (with Thy saints forever).

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Symphony No. 3 in C minor

Florence Price

Florence Price

Symphony No.3 in C minor

Composer: born April 9, 1887, Little Rock, AR; died June 3, 1953, Chicago

Work composed: 1938-39

World premiere: Valter Poole led the Michigan WPA Symphony Orchestra (aka the Detroit Civic Symphony) on November 6, 1940

Instrumentation: 4 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, castanets, crash cymbals, gong, orchestral bells, sand paper, slapstick, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tambourine, triangle, wood block, xylophone, celesta, harp, and strings

Estimated duration: 28 minutes

Florence Price, the first Black female American composer to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra, enjoyed considerable renown during her lifetime. Her compositional skill and fame notwithstanding, however, the entrenched institutional racism and sexism of the white male classical music establishment effectively erased Price and her music from general awareness for decades after her death in 1953. More than 50 years later, in 2009, a large collection of scores and unpublished works by Price were discovered in a house in rural Illinois. Since then, many ensembles and individual musicians have begun including Price's music in concerts, and audiences are discovering her distinctive, polished body of work for the first time.

The daughter of a musical mother, Price was a piano prodigy, giving her first recital at age four and publishing her first composition at 11. During her childhood and teens in Little Rock, Arkansas, Price's mother was the guiding force behind her piano and composition studies. In 1903, at age 16, Price won admittance to New England Conservatory (she had to "pass" as Mexican and listed her hometown as Pueblo, Mexico, to circumvent prevailing racial bias against Blacks), where she double majored in organ performance and piano pedagogy. While at NEC, Price also studied composition with George



Mozart Requiem

The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart
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Whitefield Chadwick. Chadwick was an early advocate for women composers, and he believed, as did Antonín Dvořák before him, that American composers should incorporate the rich traditions of American vernacular music into their own work, rather than trying to imitate European styles.

Price, already inclined in this direction, was encouraged by Chadwick; many of her works reflect the expressive, distinctive idioms of what were then referred to as “Negro” traditions: spirituals, ragtime, jazz, and folkdance rhythms whose origins trace back to Africa. In 1938, Price wrote, “We are even beginning to believe in the possibility of establishing a national musical idiom. We are waking up to the fact pregnant with possibilities that we already have a folk music in the Negro spirituals – music which is potent, poignant, compelling. It is simple heart music and therefore powerful. It runs the gamut of emotions.”

Price’s later works, including the Symphony No. 3, fuse these uniquely Black American musical idioms with the modernist European language employed by many classical composers of the day. Price explained, “[The Symphony No. 3 is] a cross section of present-day Negro life and thought with its heritage of that which is past, paralleled or influenced by concepts of the present day,” specifically, her use of the expressively dissonant harmonic language of the 20th century.

Each of the Third Symphony’s four movements juxtaposes elements of both musical traditions, often in opposition to one another. The Andante; Allegro opens with a slow, pensive introduction in which brasses and winds feature prominently. This gives way to the Allegro’s restless, harmonically unsettled first theme. A solo trombone introduces a contrasting second section, featuring original melodies grounded in the Black vernacular tradition. The pastoral quality of the Andante *ma non troppo* evokes the warm serenity of a summer afternoon, while the Juba, an African dance brought to America by enslaved people, transmits its infectious ebullience through syncopated rhythms and specific percussion accents, particularly the castanets and xylophone. The closing Scherzo combines Black-inflected rhythms and 20th-century harmonies in an orchestral showcase full of virtuosic passages.

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Mozart Requiem

The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart to the Stage!



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Mozart Requiem

The MSO Chorus Brings Mozart
to the Stage!