



## **77th Season**

# **Virtual MLK Holiday Concert**

Saturday, January 15, 2022, 2:00 pm

**Leonard Hayes, piano**  
**Program**

**George Walker: Piano Sonata No.1**

Allegro energico

Theme and variations

**Johannes Brahms: Intermezzo for piano, Op. 117 No. 2**

Andante non troppe e con molto espressione

**Ellis Marsalis: The Fourth Autumn**

**Margaret Bonds: Troubled Water**

### **Post-Concert Q&A**

Rich Capparella takes questions from the audience for Leonard Hayes and Darlene Evans, Chair of the MLK Westside Coalition.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83721070806>

# Program Notes

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## **Piano Sonata No. 1**

### **George Walker (1922-2018)**

George Walker had a long and distinguished career as a pianist and composer. He began studying the piano at age five and was admitted to the Oberlin Conservatory at fourteen. He continued his studies at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where he studied piano with Rudolf Serkin and composition with Rosario Scalero, who also taught Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti. Walker was a prolific composer, with over ninety published works, including five piano sonatas, many songs, and numerous orchestral compositions. His *Lyric for Strings* was performed by the Santa Monica Symphony in 2019. Walker was the first African-American composer to receive the Pulitzer Prize in music for his work *Lilacs for voice and orchestra*, in 1996, the premiere being with the Boston Symphony.

The Piano Sonata No. 1 was composed in 1953, a time when Walker was very active as a concert pianist. The work is in three movements of which the first two are performed by Mr. Hayes. The first movement, *Allegro energico*, is heavily contrapuntal, working on lines dominated by the interval of a fourth. The second movement, *Theme and variations* takes its theme from the traditional song, "Bury Me Beneath the Willow". The movement as a whole is more open and immediately accessible than the first.

## **Intermezzo No. 2 from Opus 117**

### **Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

The Three Intermezzi that make up Opus 117, dated 1892, were, along with the pieces in Opus 118 and Opus 119 (which appeared the following year) the last compositions of Brahms for solo piano, and among his last works altogether - his final work was Opus 121. They are gentle, contemplative, inward-looking and deeply personal works, far from the piano heroism of many of his youthful piano compositions. The tone is valedictory. The well-known critic, Edward Hanslick, an ardent supporter of Brahms, described them as "pensive, grateful, dreamy, resigned, and elegiac." Brahms himself called them "three lullabies to my sorrows". The second intermezzo is especially beautiful and moving, and is one of the most beloved of Brahms' compositions. It and the first intermezzo were inspired by Herder's translation of the ancient Scottish "Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament", a sorrowful lullaby of the lady to her son, born out of wedlock. The opening lines appear at the beginning of the score: *Schlaf sanft, mein Kind, schlaf sanft und schon, Mich dauret's sehr dich weiner senn* (Sleep gently my child, sleep gently and beautifully. It grieves me to see you cry.)

## **Fourth Autumn**

### **Ellis Marsalis (1934-2020)**

Ellis Marsalis is best known today as the patriarch of the Marsalis musical family including sons Wynton and Branford, who have become highly celebrated. Ellis Marsalis was a distinguished musician in his own right, with more than twenty albums to his credit along with a long successful career as a musical educator at various New Orleans musical centers. While Marsalis was a skilled jazz improviser and taught improvisation as well, Fourth Autumn is a work composed in a harmonic and rhythmic style related to “soft” jazz but with classical overtones. It is a moving and beautiful work that makes clear how gifted a composer Ellis Marsalis was. His own performance of the work was recorded for Rounder Records and remains available on YouTube.

## **Troubled Water**

### **Margaret Bonds (1913-1972)**

Margaret Bonds came from a musical background: her mother was a church musician and was connected with many musicians and artistic figures of the African-American community in Chicago, including the pioneering composer Florence Price. Bonds showed talent very early for composition, her first being when she was five years old. She was also a gifted piano student and became an outstanding pianist and composer after studies at Northwestern and Julliard. In New York, she became friends with the celebrated poet Langston Hughes and set many of his poems to music, including several extended settings of Hughes words that were performed as theater pieces.

Troubled Water is the third movement of a suite of three piano pieces, Spiritual Suite. Trouble Water is based thematically on the song “Wade in the Water”, which, while a spiritual in character, is also believed to be a coded version of instructions for slaves to reach the Underground Railroad just before the Civil War. Wading in the water is not just for baptism but to foil attempts of slave owners and their dogs to track runaways. Other lines have similar double meanings. The song was popularized later by Ramsey Lewis in a 1966 recording in jazz style, which oddly became the theme music for the long-running German weekly news program, Berichte von heute. Bonds' treatment of the song retains the spirit of the original while adding musical elaboration in a remarkable composition that is a high point of her work for her own instrument. She often used the work as the conclusion of her solo piano concerts.

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**Program Notes by Robert E. Greene**

## **77th CONCERT SEASON 2021-2022**

**Saturday, February 19, 2022, 7:00 pm**

### **ANNUAL MLK HOLIDAY CONCERT**

Gary Pratt, Guest Conductor

Leonard Hayes, piano

**Sunday, May 29, 2022, 7:00 pm**

### **MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND CONCERT**

Zain Khan, Guest Conductor

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### **SPRING CONCERT**

Brian Stone, Guest Conductor

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# Leonard Hayes

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Leonard Hayes is currently a doctoral student at the University of Southern California where he serves as a graduate teaching assistant in the department of Keyboard Studies. He previously served as the Head of Piano Studies and Assistant Director in the Music Conservatory at the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (Dallas, TX).

Among his many honors, Mr. Hayes was awarded first prize in the 2015 National Association of Negro Musicians Piano Competition. As a recitalist and chamber musician Mr. Hayes has performed across the U.S. and abroad at venues as diverse as the Sweelinkzaal at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Hammond Hall at the Winspear Opera House, Steinway Hall, Hatch Hall and Kilbourn Hall (Eastman School of Music). As a scholar, he was awarded the prestigious 2015 Links Scholarship which recognizes the "extraordinary talent and academic achievement" of an African-American scholar musician. A deeply committed teacher Mr. Hayes was named a Steinway & Sons Educational Partner and received the Steinway's prestigious 2017 Top Teacher Award for his commitment to piano education in the Dallas community.

Mr. Hayes received his Bachelor of Music Degree from the Conservatory of Music at Lawrence University with additional studies at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and a Master of Music from the Eastman School of Music. His teacher-mentors include Antoinette Perry, Douglas Humpherys, Catherine Kautsky, and T.J. Lymenstull.

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## Rich Capparella

Rich Capparella is one of the nation's best known classical music radio personalities. You can enjoy his highly acclaimed programming on KUSC, 91.5 FM. Rich has had a long and storied career. He debuted in 1998 at Carnegie Hall as a narrator in Benjamin Britten's *World of the Spirit* and later was the narrator of *The Night Before Christmas* with the Boston Pops. Beginning in 1998 Rich became a member of the annual Grammy Awards screening committee for classical music. Mr. Capparella is the founder and owner of Cardiff Studios in Santa Monica where he lives with his wife, Marcia.



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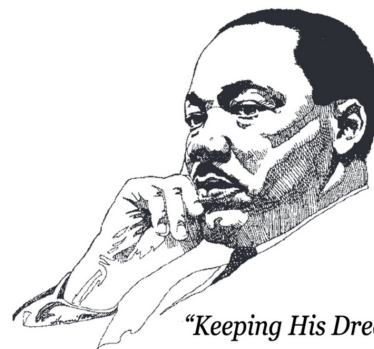
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