

Boston Landmarks Orchestra | Christopher Wilkins, Music Director

Juneteenth Celebration

Saturday, June 15 at 4:00pm
Ray & Joan Kroc Center
650 Dudley Street
Boston, MA 02125

Christopher Wilkins, *conductor*

Brianna J. Robinson, *soprano*

Castle of Our Skins (COOS) String Quartet:

Matthew Vera, *violin*

Maxwell Fairman, *violin*

Ashleigh Gordon, *viola*

Francesca McNeeley, *cello*

Shuffle Along Overture (1921)*

Eubie Blake
(1887–1983)

Lift Every Voice and String (premiere performance, string
orchestra version)

Maxwell Fairman
(b. 2004)

"Enfin une foule... L'Amour, devient propice"
from *L'Amant Anonyme* (1780)

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de
Saint-Georges
(1745–1799)

Brianna J. Robinson, *soprano*

Waltz (Novellette No. 3) (1903)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor
(1875–1912)

Maxwell Fairman, *violin*

Adoration (1951)

Florence Price
(1887–1953)
arranged Peter Simcich

Maxwell Fairman, *violin*

Can't You Line Em (1940)

William Grant Still
(1895–1978)

Freedom Songs (2021)

Jessie Montgomery
(b. 1981)

My Lord, What a Morning
Lay Dis Body Down
My Father, How Long?
The Day of Judgement

Brianna J. Robinson, *soprano*

Umoja (1997)

Valerie Coleman
(b. 1970)

COOS String Quartet

Blue in Green (1959)

Miles Davis & Bill Evans
(1926–1991)
(1929–1980)
arranged Lorento Golofeev

COOS String Quartet

Castle Perfect Trot (1914)

James Reese Europe
& Ford T. Dabney
(1881–1919)
(1883-1958)
arranged Carl F. Williams

COOS String Quartet

**Shuffle Along* Overture Courtesy the Rick Benjamin Collection

Run Time

The total run time of this concert is approximately **an hour and a half**, with no intermission.

Boston Landmarks Orchestra



Boston Landmarks Orchestra builds community through great music. Landmarks produces free concerts and musical events across the greater Boston area. Increasing access to music for everyone, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the core of all its programming. Between 2018 and 2023, 70% of the repertoire Landmarks performed was written by composers of color or women. The orchestra intentionally promotes artists and targets audiences that have been historically excluded from orchestral music. Landmarks was founded in 2001 and began its signature summer concert series at the DCR Hatch Memorial in 2007. The orchestra also performs community concerts at local venues in neighborhoods such as Roxbury, Dorchester, and Jamaica Plain.



CHRISTOPHER WILKINS was appointed Music Director of the Boston Landmarks Orchestra in the spring of 2011. Since then, he has expanded the orchestra's mission of making great music accessible to the whole community. He has also helped develop the orchestra's Breaking Down Barriers initiative, making accessibility a priority in all aspects of the orchestra's activities.

Mr. Wilkins also serves as Music Director of the Akron Symphony. As a guest conductor, Mr. Wilkins has appeared with many of the leading orchestras of the United States, including those of Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco. Previously, Mr. Wilkins served as Music Director of the Orlando Philharmonic, the San Antonio Symphony, and the Colorado Springs Symphony.

He has served as associate conductor of the Utah Symphony, assisting Joseph Silverstein; assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi; conducting assistant with the Oregon Symphony under James DePreist; and was a conducting fellow at Tanglewood. He was winner of the Seaver/NEA Award in 1992.

Born in Boston, Mr. Wilkins earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard College in 1978. He received his master of music degree at Yale University in 1981, and in 1979 attended the Hochschule der Künste in West Berlin as a recipient of the John Knowles Paine traveling fellowship. As an oboist, he performed with many ensembles in the Boston area, including the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra at Tanglewood, and the Boston Philharmonic under Benjamin Zander.

Violin I

Gregory Vitale, CONCERTMASTER
Colin Davis
Rose Drucker

Violin II

Paula Oakes, PRINCIPAL
Stacy Alden

Viola

Kenneth Stalberg, PRINCIPAL
Noriko Futagami

Cello

Aron Zelkowicz, PRINCIPAL
Sam Ou

Bass

Bebo Shiu, ACTING PRINCIPAL

Flute

Lisa Hennessy, PRINCIPAL

Piccolo

Lisa Hennessy

Oboe

Andrew Price, PRINCIPAL

Clarinet

Margo McGowan, ACTING PRINCIPAL

Bassoon

Gregory Newton, ACTING PRINCIPAL

Horn

Kevin Owen, PRINCIPAL

Trumpet

Dana Oakes, PRINCIPAL

Trombone

Hans Bohn, ACTING PRINCIPAL

Piano

David Coleman

Percussion

Robert Schulz, PRINCIPAL

Personnel Manager

Christopher Ruigomez

Librarian

Daniel Meza

Assistant Librarian

Sophie Steger

Guest Artists

Castle of our Skins is a Black arts institution dedicated to fostering cultural curiosity and celebrating Black artistry through music. In classrooms, concert halls, and beyond, Castle of our Skins invites Black heritage and culture exploration, spotlighting both unsung and celebrated figures of past and present. The name *Castle of our Skins* comes from the celebrated poet [Nikki Giovanni's](#) *poem for nina*. The poem beautifully captures the sense of adoration and celebration for the very fabric that makes us who we are: our skin.



Soprano **Brianna J. Robinson**, whom The Boston Globe proclaimed as, "...a radiant voice and presence" is a native of Ravenna, Ohio. She is a former Jane and Steven Akin Emerging Artist with Boston Lyric Opera where she covered and performed roles such as Lucy in Gregory Spears' *Fellow Travelers*, Mimi (cover) in Puccini's *La Boheme*, Lena in Ana Solokovic's *Svabda* and covered several roles in Paul Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale*. She recently stepped on stage as Julie in Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels' 2023 Pulitzer Prize-winning opera, *Omar*.

In the 2023-2024 season, Ms. Robinson makes her Carnegie Hall debut with The Cecilia Chorus of NY in Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Dona nobis pacem*. She also returned to Boston Lyric Opera as Leontine in Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-George's *The Anonymous Lover*. Last season, she made multiple concert debuts with several orchestras, including the Akron Symphony Orchestra, Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra/New World Chorale, and the Handel and Haydn Society in the powerful performances of 'Crossing the Deep'. Ms. Robinson was named a finalist in the Benjamin Matthews Vocal Competition with Opera Ebony, awarded first prize at the 6th Getting to Carnegie Competition and recently was selected as a District Winner of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. She has participated in international programs including the Berlin Opera Academy and Opernfest Prague. She made her international debut in Ruse, Bulgaria in 2021 creating the role of Ophelia in the world premiere of Joseph Summer's *Hamlet*.

Ms. Robinson is a proud graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University and the Eastman School of Music.



Maxwell Fairman is an 18-year-old violinist involved in several arts programs at the local, state, and national levels. A devoted chamber musician, Maxwell Fairman made his White House debut in 2016 at age 12, as part of the string quartet The Perfect Fourth. The Perfect Fourth performed alongside the renowned duo Black Violin as well. In addition, Maxwell performed at Stern Auditorium in Carnegie Hall in 2017 as a part of the Peraza Music Workshop Ensemble. A leader, he is the concertmaster of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra (CSYO) Philharmonic, concertmaster of the Walnut Hills High School Chamber Orchestra, and 1st violinist for the CSYO Nouveau Chamber Players.

Maxwell Fairman is a Semi-Finalist for the 2022 Sphinx Competition, Junior Division. He appeared on NPR's From the Top show during their 21-22 season. Maxwell made his solo debut at age 13 with the Cincinnati Philharmonic Orchestra. He won first place in the NAACP'S National ACT-SO competition in 2019. He won second in the American Protégé International Piano and Strings Competition Junior Division in 2018, which allowed him to perform at the Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall. Maxwell won first place in the 2021 Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra Philharmonic Concerto Competition. He has won several other local, regional, and state competitions.

Maxwell Fairman began playing the violin at age 4 and studies with Almita Vamos and Davis King. He has enhanced his studies at several summer camps: he went to the Sphinx Performance Academy from 2016-2017, earned a full merit scholarship to the Interlochen Arts Academy, where he was concertmaster, studied with esteemed teachers Danielle Belen, Simon James, and Elbert Tsai at the Center Stage Strings Institute in 2018, and studied under Ivan Ženatý and was coached in chamber music by Kikuei Ikeda (former Tokyo Quartet violinist) at the Meadowmount School of Music in 2019. Maxwell took virtual lessons with David Bowlin and Sergiu Schwartz at the Bowdoin Online Music Festival in 2020. In 2021, Maxwell received a full merit scholarship and studied with Danielle Belen at the virtual Center Stage Strings Institute.

A dedicated academic student as well, Maxwell Fairman earned a perfect score on the ACT exam, and he is a Presidential Scholar candidate, AP Scholar with Distinction and National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist. He is President of the Music Club and an active member in the Programming Club. He is a recipient of the inaugural 17 Under Seventeen Awards. During his free time, Maxwell enjoys hanging out with his friends and beating them in video games and card games.



Violinist and Violist **Matthew Vera** is known for his versatility as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader.

Matthew has been a member of the Boston Philharmonic's first violin section since 2010. He recently stepped in as guest concertmaster to perform *Ein Heldenleben* to critical acclaim: "Playing with pure tone, terrific character, and not a bit of hesitation, Vera delivered an account of the solo part that was wholly captivating". (Boston Arts Fuse); "Matthew Vera projected non-stop, drop-dead gorgeous tone, alternately flippant and ravishing, as directed. A virtual golden spotlight enwreathed him in laurels." (Boston Musical Intelligencer). Orchestrally, Matthew performs in many ensembles including: The Boston Philharmonic, The Albany Symphony, The Portland

Symphony, The Rhode Island Philharmonic, The Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Teatro Nuovo, Eureka Ensemble, and the New Bedford Symphony.

An avid chamber musician, Matthew is the first violinist of the emerging Izarra String Quartet. Izarra explores fresh interpretations of the classic repertoire with a keen focus on amplifying compositional voices of the LGBTQIA + BIPOC communities. Matthew is a violinist with *Castle of our Skins*, a concert and educational series dedicated to celebrating Black artistry through music. He has also been heard with Radius Ensemble, Juventas New Music Ensemble, and Ogunquit Chamber Music Festival.

Matthew made his solo debut on the viola with the Tucson Philharmonia at age 14. He has appeared as soloist with the Buffalo Philharmonic, The Tucson Philharmonia, The Tucson Symphony, The World Youth Symphony Orchestra, and The New England Conservatory Symphony. He has attended numerous festivals including Tanglewood, The Heifetz Institute, Brevard Music Center, Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and more.

A native of Tucson, Arizona, Matthew's early musical training was fostered through the Tucson Unified Public Schools and Tucson Junior Strings, a unique conductorless orchestral training program for young people. He is a graduate of The New England Conservatory where he studied with James Buswell, Lucy Chapman, and Donald Weilerstein. His mentors have included: The Borromeo String Quartet, Roger Tapping, Martha Katz, and John Heiss.



Described as a “charismatic and captivating performer,” **Ashleigh Gordon** has recorded with Switzerland’s Ensemble Proton and Germany’s Ensemble Modern; performed with Grammy-award winning BMOP and Grammy-nominated A Far Cry string ensemble; appeared at the prestigious BBC Proms Festival with the Chineke! Orchestra and at Carnegie Hall with the Gateways Music Festival among numerous ensembles. Comfortable on an international stage, she has performed in such venues as the Royal Albert and Royal Festival Halls (London), *Konzerthaus Berlin* and *Oper Frankfurt* (Germany), *Gare du Nord* and *Dampfzentrale Bern* (Switzerland), *Centre Pompidou* (Paris), and the Lee Hysan Concert Hall (Hong Kong)

Ashleigh is co-founder, Artistic Director and violist of **Castle of our Skins**, a Boston-based concert and educational series devoted to celebrating Black Artistry through music. In recognition of her work, she has been featured in the Boston Globe and NYTimes, and awarded the 2016 Charles Walton Diversity Advocate Award from the American Federation of Musicians. She is a 2019 Brother Thomas Fellow, a nominee for the 2020 “Americans for the Arts Johnson Fellowship for Artists Transforming Communities,” and named one of WBUR’s “ARTery 25”, twenty-five millennials of color impacting Boston’s arts and culture scene.

As an advocate of social change, Ashleigh has presented lectures on citizen artistry and entrepreneurship, workshops for fellow educators on Caribbean and African American folksongs and children playsongs, guest lectured at numerous colleges and conservatories, and frequently appears as a panelist discussing topics of diversity in classical music. She is a Board of Director for Project STEP, a rigorous string training organization for Black and Latino youth, and serves on the Steering Committee for the Boston Cultural Leaders Coalition, a near 40-member strong arts and cultural movement dedicated to intersectional racial justice and equity in the City of Boston.

Ashleigh is a graduate from the New England Conservatory, *Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt*, and Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music. Her primary teachers include Carol Rodland and Louise Zeitlin. She can be heard on chamber music and orchestral recordings under the Mode, Siemens, BMOP/Sound, Navona, *Musiques-Suisse* record labels. Her most recent recording **Homage: Chamber Music of the African Continent and Diaspora**, can be purchased on the London-based Lorelt record label and features pianist-musicologist Dr. Samantha Ege and Castle of our Skins. For more information, please visit www.violashe.com and www.castleskins.org. (Photo credit: Robert Torres)



Haitian-American cellist **Francesca McNeeley** has received critical acclaim as a collaborator and soloist, her playing described as “virtuosic”, “impressive” and “a remarkable display” by the [Boston Musical Intelligencer](#). She enjoys an eclectic career in the Boston area as a chamber musician, orchestral player, and modern music advocate. She has premiered dozens of works, solo and chamber music—including pieces by John Harbison, Bongani Ndodana-Breen, Mark

Neikrug, Augusta Read Thomas, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Joseph Phibbs, and Tyson Davis. Since the fall of 2022 she has become a core member of the Grammy-nominated [A Far Cry](#) chamber orchestra. She frequently performs with [Castle of Our Skins](#) and the [Celebrity Series of Boston](#). She has also performed with the Boston Symphony, Boston Pops, Boston Ballet, and Sarasota Orchestras, and can be heard on BMOP/sound with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. Catch her new album release, [Homage: Chamber Music from the African Continent & Diaspora](#), performing with Castle of Our Skins and [Dr. Samantha Ege](#).

Ms. McNeeley graduated Princeton University *Phi Beta Kappa*, and went on to receive scholarships to attend the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University and the New England Conservatory for her graduate degrees in cello performance. She has earned fellowships and prizes from the Tanglewood Music Center, where she also served as a New Fromm Player. With her Fromm colleagues she has founded the Chroma Trio, championing modern string trio repertoire. She has received fellowships to attend the Music Academy of the West, Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, & Toronto Summer Music. She has been awarded multiple grants from the Sphinx Organization, and now serves on The Artist Council for the National Alliance for Audition Support. Her teachers and mentors have included Tom Kraines, Darrett Adkins, Norman Fischer, Yeesun Kim, and Astrid Schween.

Francesca is dedicated to community engagement through teaching and mentoring. In addition to her private teaching studio, she serves on the faculties for the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra’s Intensive Community Program, Project STEP, as well as the Charles Ives Music Festival at the Western Connecticut Youth Orchestras

Ambassador Program

Started in 2022, the Ambassador Program aims to seasonally employ enthusiastic, music-loving folks from a variety of backgrounds, representing the diversity of Boston’s neighborhoods. With 54% of our Ambassadors speaking more than one language—including Spanish, Portuguese, and French—they help spread the word of Boston Landmarks Orchestra to a vast number of Boston communities, including Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, East Boston and more. From promoting our concerts in their own neighborhoods, to helping patrons both new and familiar navigate the Esplanade, our Ambassadors are here to engage as many people as possible, promoting Boston Landmarks Orchestra’s mission of building community through great music.

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