

## **Fanfare on *Amazing Grace* (2003 for organ, orch. 2011)**

**ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK<sup>N</sup> BORN IN 1941**

Adolphus Hailstork, one of America's most distinguished and widely performed composers, served as Eminent Scholar and Professor of Music at Old Dominion University in Norfolk from 1999 until his retirement in 2020, when he received University's Vianne B. Webb Award for Lifetime Achievement for involvement in the area's cultural community. His many other honors include the Virginia Governor's Award for the Arts, an honorary doctorate from the College of William and Mary, Cultural Laureate of the State of Virginia, and the Strong Men & Strong Women Award from Dominion Energy of Virginia (presented to "African-Americans whose accomplishments and determination demonstrate true excellence in leadership"). Hailstork's *Fanfare on "Amazing Grace"* is a modern analogue of Bach's chorale preludes, which embed a familiar church hymn in elaborate counterpoint.

## ***Andante cantabile* for String Orchestra (1935)**

**FLORENCE B. PRICE<sup>N</sup> 1888-1953**

Florence Beatrice Smith was born in 1888 into the prosperous and cultured family of a dentist in Little Rock, Arkansas, and received her first piano lessons from her mother, a schoolteacher and singer; Florence first played in public when she was four. She later also took up organ and violin, and at age fourteen was admitted to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. After graduating with honors in 1907, she returned to Arkansas to teach at Arkadelphia Academy and Shorter College and was appointed music department chair at Clark University in Atlanta in 1910. She returned to Little Rock two years later to marry attorney Thomas J. Price, and left classroom teaching to devote herself to raising two daughters, giving private instruction in violin, organ and piano, and composing.

In 1927, following racial unrest in Arkansas, the Price family moved to Chicago, where Florence studied at various schools and published four pieces for piano soon after arriving there. In 1932, she won First Prize in the Wanamaker Foundation Composition Competition for her Symphony in E minor, which became the first symphonic work by an African-American woman performed by a major American orchestra when it was premiered on June 15, 1933 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Price continued to compose prolifically and received numerous performances, including her arrangement of the spiritual *My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord* that Marian Anderson used to close her historic concert at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on April 9, 1939. Florence Price died in Chicago on June 3, 1953.

Price composed her String Quartet in A minor in 1935; the provenance of the piece is unknown, as are any early performances. The manuscript ended up among the many scores, letters, diaries and photographs discovered in 2009 during renovations of an abandoned house in St. Anne, Illinois, seventy miles south of Chicago, which had been Price's weekend home and work studio. That nearly lost discovery is now preserved in the Florence Beatrice Smith Price Collection at the University of Arkansas. The Quartet No. 2 was published in 2019 and given its apparent premiere on October 27, 2019 at a concert at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston dedicated to celebrating Black artistry through music; the work's first recording, by the Catalyst Quartet on Azica Records, was issued in 2022.

The Quartet's second movement, the hymn-like *Andante cantabile*, is rooted in the poignant expression and style of old plantation gospel songs.

## ***Overture for the 21st Century: Joy of the Soul* (2023)**

**JOE JAXSON<sup>N</sup> BORN IN 2000**

Joe Jaxson was born in New York City in 2000 and raised in a musical household in Staunton, Virginia, inheriting his love and familiarity with jazz, soul and R&B from his father and classical and gospel from his mother. Jaxson started composing in high school, winning honorable mention in 2017 for his brass quartet *Tranquil, Pulse, and Drive!* in the Young Composers Competition of John Madison University's 37th Contemporary Music Festival, and recognition for his wind ensemble piece *Fanfare and Celebration* at the following year's Virginia Music Educators Association's Composition Festival. Having already established a reputation at JMU, he studied composition there and also participated during those years in the Film Scoring Workshop at New York University and masterclasses and seminars at the University of Georgia and Wintergreen Music Festival in Virginia before graduating in 2022. Jaxson is now a graduate fellowship student at the University of Texas at Austin.

"In early 2023," Jaxson wrote, "Diane Wittry, Music Director of the Allentown Symphony, asked me to compose an 'upbeat and lively' piece for the closing concert of the Orchestra's 2023-2024 season that referenced my *Fanfare for the 21st Century*, written for brass and percussion during the pandemic. I typically write pieces that tell stories and

for this one I joined in on the theme of odes and hymns in the other works on this program: Hailstork's *Fanfare on 'Amazing Grace,'* Wittry's *Ode to Joy Fanfare*, and Beethoven's Choral Symphony. Growing from the spirit and elements of *Fanfare for the 21st Century*, this new *Overture for the 21st Century*, subtitled *Joy of the Soul*, taps into feelings of exhilaration, resilience, whimsicality and meaning."

## ***Ode to Joy Fanfare* (2015)**

**DIANE WITTRY**

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony transcends time, culture, and economic differences — almost everyone knows its main tune, the "*Ode to Joy*." When attending a concert featuring the Symphony, this is the melody everyone wants to hear, but it doesn't occur until about 45 minutes into the piece. To solve this dilemma, I decided to write an *Ode to Joy Fanfare* to be played at concerts featuring Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. This way, everyone can have a preview of this beloved melody before the Symphony is performed.

The actual *Ode to Joy* appears slowly in the *Fanfare*, just a few notes at a time tossed around the orchestra, but when it is finally heard in its complete form, it is played not by the members of the orchestra, but by an ensemble of young string students (usually placed in the pit area). I wanted us to remember the beauty of brotherhood for all mankind as seen through the eyes of a child.

— Diane Wittry

## **Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, "Choral" (1822-1824)**

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN N 1770-1827**

Friedrich Schiller published his poem *An die Freude* ("*Ode to Joy*") in 1785 as a tribute to his friend Christian Gottfried Körner. By 1790, when he was twenty, Beethoven knew the poem, and as early as 1793 he considered making a musical setting of it. Schiller's poem appeared in his notes in 1798, but the earliest musical ideas for its setting are found among the sketches for the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, composed simultaneously in 1811-1812. Though those sketches are unrelated to the finished *Ode to Joy* theme — that went through more than 200 revisions (!) before Beethoven was satisfied with it — they do show the composer's continuing interest in the text and the idea of setting it for chorus and orchestra.

The first evidence of the musical material that was to figure in the finished Ninth Symphony appeared in 1815, when a sketch for the Scherzo emerged among Beethoven's notes. He took up his draft again in 1817, and by the following year much of the Scherzo was sketched. It was also in 1818 that he considered including a choral movement, but as the slow movement rather than as the finale. With much still unsettled, Beethoven was forced to lay aside this vague symphonic scheme in 1818 because of ill health, a distressing court battle to secure custody of his nephew, and composition of the monumental *Missa Solemnis*, and he was not able to resume work on the piece until the end of 1822.

The 1822 sketches show considerable progress on the Symphony's first movement, little on the Scherzo, and some tentative ideas for a choral finale based on Schiller's poem. Most of the remainder of the opening movement was sketched early in 1823. The Scherzo was finished in short score by August, eight years after Beethoven first conceived its thematic material, and the third movement sketched by October. With the first three movements nearing completion, Beethoven had one major obstacle to overcome before he could complete the Symphony: how to join together the instrumental and vocal movements. He decided that a recitative — the technique that had been used for generations to bridge from one operatic number to the next — would be perfect, especially if the recitative included fragments of themes from earlier movements to unify the structure. Beethoven still had much work to do, but the composition was completed by the end of the year. When the final scoring was finished in February 1824, it had been nearly 35 years since Beethoven first considered setting Schiller's poem.

The Ninth Symphony begins with the interval of a barren open fifth, suggesting some awe-inspiring cosmic void. Thematic fragments sparkle and whirl into place to form the main theme. A group of lyrical subordinate ideas follows. The open fifth intervals return to begin the highly concentrated development section.

The second movement is a hybrid of scherzo, fugue and sonata. The following *Adagio* is a variation on two themes, almost like two separate kinds of music that alternate.

The majestic finale is divided into two large parts: the first instrumental, the second with chorus and soloists. The *Ode to Joy* theme first appears unadorned in the low strings, and many sections based on the *Ode* follow, some martial, some fugal, all radiant with the glory of Beethoven's vision.

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