

Temple University Singing Owls
Rollo Dilworth, conductor
Michael Sakell, graduate conductor
Kim Barroso, pianist

Illuminations, Part III

Monday, November 18, 2024 • 7:30PM
Lew Klein Hall, Temple Performing Arts Center
1837 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Program

Hold Fast To Dreams

Rosephanye Powell
(b. 1962)
text by Langston Hughes
(1901-1967)

Michael Sakell, conductor

A Vision Unfolding

Kyle Pederson
(b. 1971)
and Shanelle Gabriel

Prologue 1: *spoken word*

I. Reach Down, Lord (text by Robert Bode)

Prologue 2: *spoken word*

II. Beat! Drums! (text by Walt Whitman)

Prologue 3: *spoken word*

III. All of Me (text by Kyle Pederson)

Prologue 4: *spoken word*

IV. Light Outshines the Darkness (text by Shanelle Gabriel)

Prologue 5: *spoken word*

V. I Dream a World (text by Langston Hughes)

Shanelle Gabriel, spoken word

Rollo Dilworth, conductor

Sofiya Solomyanskaya, violin

Antoine Jackson, trumpet

Livi Keenan, snare drum

The Department of Vocal Arts gratefully acknowledges the support of the Elaine Brown Choral Chair Fund, which supports excellence, diversity, and community in choral activities at Temple University.

The use of photographic, audio, and video recording is not permitted.

Please turn off all electronic devices.

One hundred third performance of the 2024-2025 season.

Program Notes

Hold Fast To Dreams

Rosephanye Powell
text by Langston Hughes

African American poet, playwright and novelist Langston Hughes (1901-1967) is recognized as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance. In the early 1900's, Harlem, New York became the major cultural center for Black intellectuals and creative artists. Hughes is celebrated as one of the earliest innovators of jazz poetry which was birthed during this time. He collaborated with jazz musicians including famous artists such as pianist-composer Thelonius Monk and bassist-composer Charles Mingus. Hughes performed readings of his poems accompanied by jazz combos and wrote a children's book titled *The First Book of Jazz*.

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

In "Hold Fast to Dreams", Langston Hughes uses dreams as a metaphor for something to which one holds tightly to survive. Hughes employs two metaphors for life: a broken winged bird which does not survive because it is unable to fly; and a barren field frozen with snow where nothing survives because of the cold. This song is an encouragement for one to dream, allowing one's dreams to empower one to overcome life's challenges. Although Hughes's poem provides sad imagery of what life without dreams can be (painful, fruitless, disabling, cold and lifeless), I composed the song with an up tempo, in a major key, and a sweeping accompaniment to paint the image of a victorious bird soaring freely, high in the sky. Thus, the objective of "Hold Fast to Dreams" is to encourage one to dare to be a high-flying bird, an overcomer! The piano introduction begins with the "flying bird" motive, comprised of descending sixteenth notes (which can also be perceived as a "dream" motive) in the right hand, while the left hand quotes the melody. The piano introduction is followed by a vocal introduction where the voices present the opening lyrics and text paint the word "hold". In the second half of the song which begins in measure 63, I add the words "so fly, fly, take wings and fly" to exhort the singer and listener to courageously persevere and overcome. Since Hughes was a jazz poet, I employed jazz harmonies and lilting piano lines, jazz vocal slurs, and placement of the voices in the upper tessitura of the vocal ranges to express the freedom and joy that the bird experiences while soaring through the sky. In the last measures (mm 82-83) of the song, the sixteenth notes in the right hand of the piano, ascend (different from the beginning motive) to depict the bird taking off for its final flight, soaring upward toward the horizon!

Note by Rosephanye Powell

Movement I: Reach Down, Lord

The poet is asking God's spirit to reach down and lift us up—lift us out of the pit, out of the darkness, and lift us to the light...lift us up to wholeness. In the spoken word that precedes this movement, Shanelle Gabriel does something important: the narrator asks not only God to reach down but the narrator challenges the listener to reach down...to get into the mess with those who are hurting and to lift them up. So when the choir sings the refrain, Reach Down, Lord, we hear not only a cry to God, but also an invitation to all of us, to reach down—and out—to another.

Movement II: Beat! Drums!

This iconic Walt Whitman poem was written during the Civil War. It's an in-your-face text, exploring how ordinary daily life is impossible during war; everything is disrupted. Whitman is also rallying the listener- at the time his Union countrymen-to join the righteous fight to end slavery, and to preserve the union that was the United States. In the spoken word that precedes this movement, Shanelle sets this poem up beautifully by challenging us to rally around the cause of justice...to make our quest today for justice central to our lives...inviting us to think of this text not as a battle cry to fight against one another with weapons, but to fight for each other, giving all we have to make this vision of wholeness in community a reality. Musically, the beat of the drum, the blow of the bugle, along with meter and rhythm changes, highlight the inescapability of the Whitman text.

Movement III: All of Me

I think we all sense our communities becoming more fractured; we witness individual relationships fraying in our neighborhoods, schools, churches, places of work, and even our families. One of the root causes of this is, I believe, how quick we are to judge others-and hold others in contempt- for their politics, their religion, gender or sexual expression, skin color, class, education level, and a host of other characteristics. This piece is an invitation to lay down our judgments. It's also an invitation to see those aspects of identity that are important to people... but to see people around us as more than just a collection of isolated characteristics... to see all of them.

Movement IV: Light Transforms the Darkness

Shanelle's text is a call to action: to live our light and love out into the world a world that desperately needs light and love. It seemed fitting that this piece includes a section where both spoken word and singing happen simultaneously, joining the two primary artistic expressions of the greater work and allowing all choir members to give voice to the sense of immediacy present in the spoken word.

Movement V: I Dream a World

The work concludes with the iconic Langston Hughes text. The choir and narrator have been casting a vision, and it's hard to state it better than Hughes; I dream a world where none are scorned, where love will bless the earth and peace its paths adorn. At the end of the movement, the listener will hear earlier melodies reprised as all voices are gradually layered in; and for the first time, all instruments sound together, building to a thunderous conclusion that invites us all to say, "yes. that's a vision I want to help make real."

Note by Kyle Pederson

1. Reach Down, Lord
Reach down, Lord.
Reach your justice down.
When we walk on the broken road,
Reach your justice down.

If we stumble into the pit
And the dark is all we see,
Reach below and lift us up;
Reach your justice down.

Reach down, Lord.
Reach your justice down.
When we walk in the shadow of death,
Reach your justice down.

Robert Bode

2. Beat! Beat! Drums!

Beat! beat! drums! blow! bugles! blow!

Through the windows through doors burst like a ruthless force,

Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,

Into the school where the scholar is studying,

Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with his
bride,

Nor the peaceful farmers any peace, ploughing their field or gathering grain,

So fierce you whirr and pound you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Over the traffic of cities over the rumble of wheels in the streets;

Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses?

no sleepers must sleep in those beds,

No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or speculators—would they
continue?

Would the talkers by talking? would the singers attempt to sing?

Would the lawyers rise in the court to state their case before the judge?

Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,

Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,

Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,

Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,

Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,

So strong you thump O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.

Walt Whitman

3. All of Me

Look at my skin.

Do you see only skin, or the soul within...

do you see what's true?

Look who I love.

Do you view me as less, I

like none of the rest of me

matters to you?

Turn off the talk on the air,

and the voices who seem to just care

about dividing and hiding us where

you won't see.

Look at my faith.

Do you see my creed,

and choose to believe that's all of me?

Look at my vote.
On that alone are you likely to show
contempt for me?

You don't have to see.
But if you take the time to look at me,
you'll see the same fears and a good heart,
and the same tears that tear you apart.
See the same love, the same hope,
the same need, the same joy.

So look at my skin.
See the skin and the soul within.
See what's true.

Look who I love.
And see my faith and my vote,
but not those alone,
seek to know me, too.
Turn up the voices of truth.
Learn to let mercy through.
Love will guide us to
a world where we see.
All of me.

Turn and see.
Will you see?
All of me.

Kyle Peterson

4. Light Transforms the Darkness

Light transforms the darkness, so go...go and let your light out.

Love is what we harness, so go...go and live your love out.

We are all unified by the way our heart beats

What you feel, I feel

Different palettes and hues and variety

The Creator's tapestry

We need to see the light

Don't let the darkness hide our humanity

This is a calling.

We've been blinded by hate we were taught to believe

That's not how it should be

If my brother or sister is chained

There's no way I can say I'm free

We are the change we need

So that equality can be reality

spoken word:

Calling you to set your heart ablaze

Raise the torch, pave the way

So all can say I am free

Calling for all to have the ability to dream

To see ourselves in every being

I want you to be free

For all to find home

Wherever they may go

Step into action, words no longer hollow

We will fight for you to be free

Called to stand for all

races, abilities,

religions, identities

No matter who you love

You are worthy

You deserve to be free

I will fight for you to be free

This is our calling

We are invited into each other's life

We are called to live love

Called to be that light

5. I Dream a World
I dream a world where one
No other one will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn

I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.

A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every one is free,

Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all humankind—
Of such I dream, my world!

Langston Hughes

Guest Artist

Shanelle Gabriel is an internationally touring poet, singer, nonprofit specialist, and lupus warrior from Brooklyn, NY. Widely known for featuring on HBO's Def Poetry Jam, she has shared her fusion of poetry and singing on stages with artists such as Jill Scott, Nas, Nikki Giovanni, Talib Kweli, Anderson Paak, and more. She has performed in esteemed venues (from the Apollo Theater to The Vatican), competed in the Individual World Poetry Slam Competition, and has penned and featured in national poetry campaigns with Pandora Music, NFL Draft, Hershey, BET, and more. With a Masters in Education from Teachers College at Columbia University and over 18 years of experience as an educator, she facilitates trainings on creating culturally responsive spaces, using the arts for socio-emotional learning, and recognizing trauma responses in various settings. Shanelle is also a lupus advocate who has spoken alongside the President of the National Institute of Health, lobbied for patient rights on Capitol Hill, and is a health equity consultant for the Center for Information & Study on Clinical Research Participation. She has released three albums (streaming everywhere), and is the host of the Better Together Series on BlackDoctor.org on living with Lupus.

Temple University Singing Owls

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Edda Aish	Sam Hicks	Valerie Rushmere
Liv Asbury	Steven Hoffman	Taheerah Sabb
Camille Bachman	Elizabeth Hohwieler	Michael Sakell
Catie Becker	Julia Hopely	Athen Schaper
Isabella Bentivogli	Olivia Hopely	Lydia Shackelford
Jessica Bishop	Kristen Joseph	Peggy Shafer
Teresina Bova	Mark Kaplan	Sharon Sherry
Ellie Braddock	Harriet Katz	Helen Shoemark
Jenny Brice	Natasha Kelemen	Ariel Siegelman
Ann Eleanor Brown	Sarah Klunk	Ozella Smith
Katharine Campbell	Glenn Kutler	Katharine Song
Xavier Cannon	Simone Kutler	Sydney Spector
Charlotte Card	Isabella Lee	Wilann Spiccia
Michelle Carter	Catherine Long	Fran Surkin
Hadyn Carter-Hanson	Molly MacIsaac	Stephanie Tisdale
Elena Casey	Alekhya Madiraju	Christina Wangui
Valerie Clayton	Fay Manicke	Beverly Williams
David Clowney	Abigail Martin	Penny Williamson
Ethan Cohen	Jacquelyn Mason	Joy Wiltenburg
Rebecca Comfort	Claudia Menta	Richard Womer
Macy Conaway	Cheri Micheau	Zhaoyang Yu
Grace Cormany	Edward Moll	Darya Zarfeshan
Shannon Coulter	Angel Morgan	Jill Zhuraw
Jamil Dabney	Yacine Moueddene	
Finn De Vries	Margret Mukai	
Naomi Dobson	Alex Murray	
Ellis Dunbar	Myra Mushalla	
Pam Englehart	Julia Nagle	
Susan Feenan	Hayleigh Nash	
Elizabeth Fife	Maryam Nikan	
Kathleen Flaherty	Anya Nirschl	
Timothy Flaherty	Matthias Ohr	
Rafael Friedlander	Suzette Ortiz	
Lizzy Fryer	Mustafa Paroya	
Elena Gambino	Olivia Patton	
Teri Gemberling-Johnson	Mateo Perez Presmanes	
Anne Gold	Julia Powers	
Celeste Guerra Moravec	Dolores Redmond	
Ameenah Hankins	Talia Regan	
Charles Hannum	Sophia Robinson	
Olivia Herman	Emely Rodriguez	

Boyer College of Music and Dance

Temple University Choirs

Concert Choir

Graduate Conductors Chorus

Recital Chorus

Singing Owls

University Chorale

University Singers

University Voices

Department of Vocal Arts

Choral Activities Area

Kendra Balmer, Adjunct Professor, Conducting

Dustin Cates, Assistant Professor, Choral Music Education

Leslie Cochran, Coordinator, Department of Vocal Arts

Rollo Dilworth, Professor, Choral Music Education

Mitos Andaya Hart, Associate Director, Choral Activities

Heather Mitchell, Adjunct Professor, Conducting

Elizabeth Cassidy Parker, Associate Professor, Music Education

Paul Rardin, Chair, Department of Vocal Arts; Elaine Brown Chair of Choral Music

Jeffrey Cornelius, Professor Emeritus, Choral Music

Alan Harler, Professor Emeritus, Choral Music

Janet Yamron, Professor Emeritus, Music and Music Education

The Temple University Choirs have enjoyed a rich tradition of excellence under the batons of some of Philadelphia's most prominent conductors. The seven ensembles comprise nearly 200 students each year, and have enjoyed regional and national acclaim for their performances both individually and collectively. Between the 1940s and 1980s the combined choirs performed annually with The Philadelphia Orchestra, and since 2002 have collaborated annually with the Temple University Symphony Orchestra at the Kimmel Cultural Campus.

Temple Choirs strive for excellence, artistry, and individual growth. They embrace both standard choral works and contemporary music from all around the world. In 1967, under the preparation of Robert Page and the baton of Eugene Ormandy, the choirs performed Carl Orff's *Catulli Carmina* with The Philadelphia Orchestra, a performance that tied with Leonard Bernstein's Mahler's Symphony No. 8 for that year's Grammy Award for Best Classical Choral Performance (Other Than Opera).

Auditions for Temple Choirs

All choirs are open to Temple students of all majors by audition. For audition information, contact Leslie Cochran at leslie.cochran@temple.edu.

Boyer College of Music and Dance

The Boyer College of Music and Dance offers over 500 events open to the public each year. Students have the unique opportunity to interact with leading performers, composers, conductors, educators, choreographers and guest artists while experiencing a challenging and diverse academic curriculum. The Boyer faculty are recognized globally as leaders in their respective fields. Boyer alumni are ambassadors of artistic leadership and perform with major orchestras, opera and dance companies, teach at schools and colleges and work as professional music therapists, choreographers and composers. Boyer's recording label, BCM&D records, has produced more than forty-five recordings, garnering five GRAMMY nominations.

boyer.temple.edu

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts consists of the Boyer College of Music and Dance, School of Theater, Film and Media Arts, the George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater and the Temple Performing Arts Center. The School of Theater, Film and Media Arts engages gifted students with nationally and internationally recognized faculty scholars and professionals. A hallmark of the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts is the Los Angeles Study Away program. The George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater engages visiting performers, guest artists, set designers, playwrights and other Broadway professionals. The Temple Performing Arts Center (TPAC), a historic landmark on campus, is home to a state-of-the-art 1,200 seat auditorium and 200 seat chapel. More than 500 concerts, classes, lectures and performances take place at TPAC each year.

arts.temple.edu

Temple University

Temple University's history begins in 1884, when a young working man asked Russell Conwell if he could tutor him at night. It wasn't long before he was teaching several dozen students—working people who could only attend class at night but had a strong desire to make something of themselves. Conwell recruited volunteer faculty to participate in the burgeoning night school, and in 1888 he received a charter of incorporation for “The Temple College.” His founding vision for the school was to provide superior educational opportunities for academically talented and highly motivated students, regardless of their backgrounds or means. The fledgling college continued to grow, adding programs and students throughout the following decades. Today, Temple's more than 30,000 students continue to follow the university's official motto—*Perseverantia Vincit*, or “Perseverance Conquers”—with their supreme dedication to excellence in academics, research, athletics, the arts and more.

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