



MIDDLEBURY
PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

IMANI WINDS CATALYST QUARTET

Friday, September 24, 2021 · 7:30 PM
MAC Robison Hall & Streaming online

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Program: *(im)migration - music of change*

Afro Blue

Ramón “Mongo” Santamaría (1917–2003)

arr. Valerie Coleman

Imani Winds

Four Negro Folksongs in Counterpoint

Florence B. Price (1887–1953)

- i. *Go Down Moses*
- ii. *Somebody's Knockin' at Yo Do'*
- iii. *Little David Play on yo' Harp*
- iv. *Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jericho*

Catalyst Quartet

*Sergeant McCauley** (Vermont premiere)

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

- i. *Just Now*
- ii. *Makina*
- iii. *The Return*
- iv. *My Father, How Long*

v. *Lay Dis Body Down*

Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet

∞ *Intermission* ∞

*Concierto de Cámara***

Roberto Sierra (b. 1953)

i. Overtura

ii. Primer Interludio

ii. Juegos

iv. Segundo Interludio

v. Danza

Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet

This free performance is made possible thanks to the Sunderman Family Concert Endowment Fund, in memory of Dr. F. William Sunderman Jr. and Dr. Carolyn Reynolds Sunderman; and the Paul Nelson Performance Endowment, established in 2014.

** Written for Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet.*

Commissioned by the Middlebury Performing Arts Series

through Music Accord, and The Sphinx Organization.

Premiered at Pennsylvania State University, September 2019.

*** Commissioned by Chamber Music Northwest. Premiered at*

CMNW, Portland, OR, July 2008

Program Notes

Ramon “Mongo” Santamaria

Afro Blue, arr. by Valerie Coleman

Mongo Santamaria began his musical studies on the violin in his native Cuba but soon switched to percussion and in the process found his true instrument. Having made a distinguished reputation as an Afro-Cuban drummer, Santamaria moved to New York in 1950, when he was in his late twenties, and there he performed with Tito Puente and Cal Tjader. Santamaria had his first hit in 1963 with his version of Herbie Hancock’s *Watermelon Man*. It has been said that “A Mongo Santamaria concert is a mesmerizing spectacle for both eyes and ears, creating an incantatory spell rooted in Cuban religious rituals.”

His *Afro Blue*, composed in 1959, has become one of the most popular jazz standards of our time and has been performed by Dizzie Gillespie, John Coltrane, and many others. Imani Winds offers *Afro Blue* in an arrangement by its own composer/ arranger, flutist Valerie Coleman. This arrangement simulates an African call and response ritual, and aspires to continue the celebratory tradition that Mongo gave the world.

– Note by Eric Bromberger

Florence B. Price

Four Negro Folksongs in Counterpoint

By the year 1935, Florence B. Price came to be known as the “Dean of Negro Composers of the Middlewest,” a title in deference to “The Dean of American Negro Composers” William Grant Still. The title was attributed to her by the *Chicago Defender* for her numerous professional accomplishments, but also importantly, because she composed music with which African

Americans could identify. Indeed, Price herself embraced her own heritage as a means of self-expression, and much of her composing is rooted in a Black folk idiom, delivered through studied European techniques.

Price's *Four Negro Folksongs in Counterpoint for String Quartet* (c.1947) are often confused with her *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint*, also for String Quartet, but written in 1951. The confusion probably lies around the fact that the *Four Negro Songs* – *Go Down Moses*, *Somebody's knocking on Yo' Do'*, *Little David Play on yo' harp*, and *Joshua Fit de battle ob Jericho* – have yet to be republished after being rediscovered in an abandoned house outside Chicago in 2009, in conjunction with the fact that Price originally named the five folksongs of 195, *Five Negro Folksongs*, but changed the title twice before settling on the current title. This confusion has done a great disservice to the popularity of this quartet, as it is an incredibly rich and electrifying work that has much to offer but is scarcely known.

Florence B. Price was herself a participant in the Great Migration of Blacks in the early 20th century, escaping the violent racism of her native Little Rock, and moving to Chicago, where she became an important contributor in the great Chicago Renaissance between 1935 and 1950, regularly associating with icons Langston Hughes, Marion Anderson, and Margaret Bonds, and creating a body of work that spoke authentically to the American voice whilst breaking down race, gender, and economic barriers. Her roots as a deeply religious southern Black woman are particularly on show in the *Four Negro Folksongs*, and she uses the gravitas of the songs' Spiritual motifs as building blocks for dramatic narratives, where the four voices of the quartet are conversing, interacting, commenting, and at times battling. The use of *Go Down Moses* is of particular affect as the opening movement. The Spiritual's origin is attributed to the Underground Railroad, where "Conductors" would sing the Song as secret code to lead Slaves North. Its historical power as well as its allegorical depiction of Blacks escaping bondage give the Song a vitality few others can match. Price taps into this ethos and infuses the entire

movement, leading up to a point that can only be described as Moses parting the Red Sea – where the inner voices oscillate tremendous tremelandi while the first violin recites the theme in octaves. It is a powerful moment that ends in all four voices blistering towards the finish line, reaching the promised land.

– *Note by Paul Laraia*

Jessie Montgomery

Sergeant McCauley

“Music is my connection to the world,” says violinist and composer Jessie Montgomery, and her oeuvre bears witness to the visceral truth of that claim. Her music, marked by a deeply personal compositional language that combines her classical training with vernacular and improvisatory styles, impresses for its narrative power – a quality for which the composer credits her family’s storytelling tradition. Montgomery’s mother is an actor and playwright who has created numerous theater pieces rooted in her family history, “so I’ve been witness to that

all of my life,” she says. “That ethos has found its way into my music.” Montgomery’s tone poem *Records from a Vanishing City* (2016), composed for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, recounts her childhood on Manhattan’s Lower East Side during an artistically vibrant time. More broadly probing her African-American heritage is *Five Slave Songs* (2018), commissioned for soprano Julia Bullock by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Sergeant McCauley similarly draws from Montgomery’s personal history. Scored for wind quintet and string quartet, the work is inspired by the Great Migration, the movement of more than six million African-Americans over the early and mid-twentieth century from the rural south to urban centers across the United States. The work specifically tracks the journey of Montgomery’s great-grandfather, the Sergeant McCauley after whom the work is titled: a buffalo soldier who migrated northward before ultimately returning south to Mississippi. Montgomery’s reconstruction of his journey is based as much on research (military records documenting his travels, etc.)

as on family lore, nurtured in conversation with her mother and aunt.

Like a sound map of Sergeant McCauley's travels, Montgomery's score makes use of African-American spirituals and work songs that would have been heard in the locales he likely passed. *Sergeant McCauley's* five movements allude to these songs, each representing a stop along the way. The first movement is based on "Just Now," a Methodist hymn thought to have originated in the northern seaboard slave states (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina), which McCauley, a Virginian Methodist, may have known from his youth. The flute dreamily issues the tune over a quiet, whispered texture in the strings, before the full ensemble gradually joins in.

The second movement, "Makina," depicts McCauley's time in the military, working on the construction of the country's young railroad system and the building of the Panama Canal. Unpitched air noises and key clicks in the

wind instruments and percussive effects on the strings conjure a bustling construction scene.

Following a reprise of the opening hymn tune, the fourth movement features “My Father, How Long?,” a slave song whose words – “My father, how long, poor sinner suffer here? And it won’t be long, poor sinner suffer here” – at once express a yearning for spiritual salvation and for freedom from the oppression of slavery.

The work’s final movement, “Lay Dis Body Down,” cites a funeral song said to originate from the region surrounding South Carolina, and represents Sergeant McCauley’s final resting place. Montgomery sets the song as a slow, meditative procession.

Sergeant McCauley was commissioned for Imani Winds and the Catalyst Quartet by Music Accord (of which the Middlebury Performing Arts Series is a member) and the Sphinx Organization.

– Note by Patrick Castillo © 2019

Roberto Sierra

Concierto de Cámara

In 2008, as a celebration of its tenth anniversary, Imani Winds began its Legacy Commissioning Project, with the intent of commissioning composers of color to create for the quintet works that would expand the language of contemporary classical music while representing various cultures through nontraditional voices. Imani Winds has premiered and toured the new works, including this one by Sierra and others by Stefon Harris, Simon Shaheen, Paquito D’Rivera, Wayne Shorter, and Mohammed Fairouz.

Concierto de Cámara, a nonet for wind quintet and string quartet, was jointly commissioned by Imani Winds with Stanford Lively Arts, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and Chamber Music Northwest. At its 2008 premiere in Portland, Oregon, *Concierto de Cámara* was enthusiastically received.

Throughout the spirited three-movement work, the string quartet and the wind quintet have a lively competition, beginning in the Overture and slow Primer Interludio (“First Interlude”). They have fun in Juegos (“Games”) and the expressive and more moderately paced Segundo Interludio (“Second Interlude”). The work culminates in the final Danza, characterized by its salsa rhythms. Critic David Stabler wrote, “Sierra’s exuberant nonet fairly danced off the stage ... preserving the integrity of each ensemble while demanding intricate interplay among the individual players. The cross-court volleys amid the rushing scales were exhilarating to behold.” Throughout, Sierra highlights the distinctive sounds of each of the instruments as well as the qualities of the string quartet and the wind quintet, and their combined qualities as a group of nine.

– *Note by Susan Halpern*

Ensemble Biographies

Imani Winds

Brandon Patrick George, Flute

Toyin Spellman-Diaz, Oboe

Mark Dover, Clarinet

Kevin Newton, French Horn

Monica Ellis, Bassoon



Celebrating over 20 years of music making, the Grammy nominated Imani Winds has led both a revolution and the evolution of the wind quintet through their dynamic playing, adventurous programming, imaginative collaborations, and outreach endeavors that have inspired audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

The ensemble's playlist embraces traditional chamber music repertoire, and as a 21st century group, Imani Winds is devoutly committed to expanding the wind quintet repertoire by commissioning music from new

voices that reflect historical events and the times in which we currently live.

Present and future season performances include a Jessie Montgomery composition inspired by her great-grandfather's migration from the American south to the north; and socially conscious music by Andy Akiho designed to be performed both on the concert stage and in front of immigrant detention centers throughout the country.

Imani Winds regularly performs in prominent international concert venues, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, Walt Disney Hall and the Kimmel Center. Their touring schedule has taken them throughout the Asian continent, Brazil, Australia, England, New Zealand, and across Europe.

Their national and international presence includes performances at chamber music series in Boston, New York, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Houston. Festival performances include Chamber Music

Northwest, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Ravinia Festival, Chautauqua, Banff Centre, and Music from Angel Fire.

Imani Winds' travels through the jazz world are highlighted by their association with saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter, woodwind artist and composer Paquito D'Rivera, and pianist and composer Jason Moran. Their ambitious project, "Josephine Baker: A Life of Le Jazz Hot!" featured chanteuse René Marie in performances that brought the house down in New York, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and St. Louis.

Imani Winds' commitment to education runs deep. The group participates in residencies throughout the U.S., giving performances and master classes to thousands of students each year. Academic and institutional residencies include the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Duke University, University of Chicago, Curtis Institute of Music, University of Michigan, Da Camera of Houston, and numerous others across the country.

The ensemble launched its annual Imani Winds Chamber Music Festival in 2010, bringing together young instrumentalists and composers from across North America and abroad for exploration and performance of the standard repertoire and newly composed chamber music. Festival participants also take part in workshops devoted to entrepreneurial and outreach opportunities, with the goal of creating the complete musician and global citizen.

Imani Winds has six albums on Koch International Classics and E1 Music, including their Grammy Award nominated recording, *The Classical Underground*. They have also recorded for Naxos and Blue Note and released Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* on Warner Classics. Their most recent recording, *Bruits*, has been receiving critical acclaim since its release on the Bright Shiny Things label in February 2021.

Imani Winds is regularly featured on all media platforms including NPR, American Public Media, the BBC,

SiriusXM, The New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal.

In 2016, Imani Winds received their greatest accolade in their two decades of music making: a permanent presence in the classical music section of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. Learn more at imaniwinds.com.

Catalyst Quartet

Karla Donehew-Perez, Violin

Abi Fayette, Violin

Paul Laraia, Viola

Karlos Rodriguez, Cello



Hailed by *The New York Times* at its Carnegie Hall debut as “invariably energetic and finely burnished... playing with earthy vigor,” the Grammy Award-winning Catalyst

Quartet celebrated the 10th anniversary of its founding in 2020 by the Sphinx Competition. The ensemble believes in the unity that can be achieved through music and imagines their programs and projects with this in mind, redefining and reimagining the classical music experience.

Catalyst Quartet has toured widely throughout the United States and abroad, including sold-out performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., at Chicago's Harris Theater, Miami's New World Center, and Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall in New York City. The Quartet has made guest appearances with the Cincinnati Symphony, New Haven Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, and has served as principal players and featured ensemble with the Sphinx Virtuosi on six national tours. They have been invited to perform by prominent music festivals ranging from Mainly Mozart in San Diego, to the Sitka Music Festival and Juneau Jazz and Classics in Alaska, and the Grand Canyon Music Festival, where they appear annually. Catalyst Quartet was ensemble-in-residence at the Vail Dance Festival in 2016. In 2014, they opened the

Festival del Sole in Napa, California with Joshua Bell and participated in England's Aldeburgh Music Foundation String Quartet Residency with two performances in the Jubilee Hall.

Recent seasons have brought international engagements in Russia, South Korea, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, and Puerto Rico, along with regular tours throughout the United States. Residents of New York City, the ensemble has performed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, City Center, Columbia University's Miller Theatre, The New School (for Schneider Concerts), and Lincoln Center. They played six concerts with jazz vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant for Jazz at Lincoln Center. The subsequent recording won the 2018 Grammy Award for Best Jazz Vocal Album. Catalyst Quartet launched its own New York series CQ@Howl in 2018.

Recent collaborations include *Encuentros*, a program with cellist Gabriel Cabezas with the premiere of a new work by Cuban composer Jorge Amado Molina; *(im)igration*, with the Imani Winds; and *CQ Minute*, 10 miniature string

quartets commissioned for the quartet's 10th anniversary, with works by Andy Akiho, Kishi Bashi, Billy Childs, Paquito D'Rivera, Tania Leon, Jessie Montgomery, Kevin Puts, Caroline Shaw, Joan Tower, and a to-be-named composer selected from a national call for scores. Catalyst Quartet's latest project is *UNCOVERED*, a multi-volume series of recordings for Azica Records, celebrating beautifully crafted works by composers overlooked and sidelined because of their race or gender. Volume 1, released in February 2021 with clarinetist Anthony McGill and pianist Stewart Goodyear, includes the string quartet and quintets of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Forthcoming releases will feature music of Florence Price, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, William Grant Still and George Walker, among others.

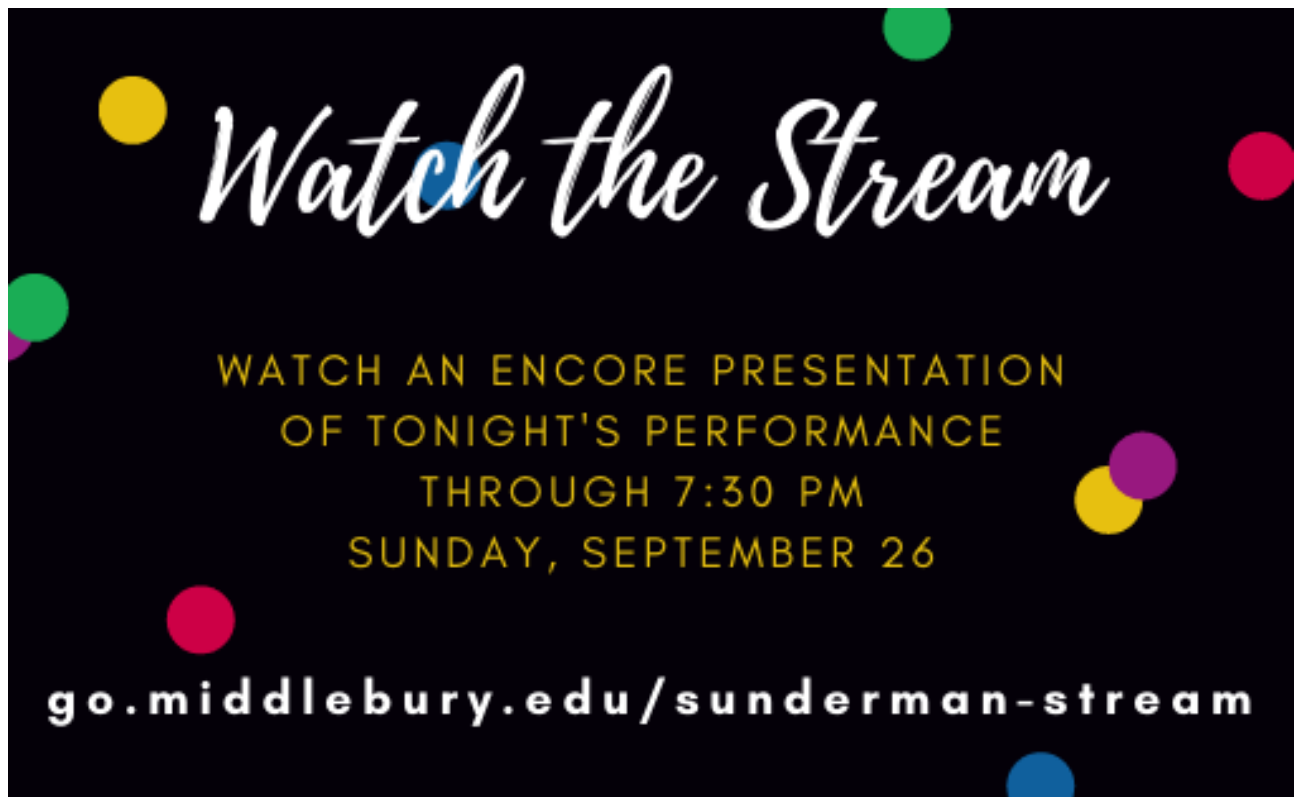
Catalyst Quartet's recordings span the ensemble's scope of interests and artistry. Their debut album, *The Bach/Gould Project*, features the Quartet's own arrangement of J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* paired with Glenn Gould's String Quartet Op. 1. *Strum* is the solo debut album of composer Jessie Montgomery, former Catalyst Quartet

violinist. *Bandaneon y cuerdas* features tango-inspired music for string quartet and bandoneon by JP Jofre, and *Dreams and Daggers* is their GRAMMY-winning album with Cecile McLorin Salvant.

Catalyst Quartet combines a serious commitment to diversity and education with a passion for contemporary works. The ensemble serves as principal faculty at the Sphinx Performance Academy at The Cleveland Institute of Music and Curtis Institute of Music. Catalyst Quartet's ongoing residencies include interactive performance presentations and workshops with Native American student composers at the Grand Canyon Music Festival and the Sphinx Organization's Overture program, which delivers access to music education in Detroit and Flint, Michigan. Past residencies have included concerts and masterclasses at the University of Michigan, University of Washington, Rice University, Houston's Society for the Performing Arts, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, The Virginia Arts Festival, and Pennsylvania State University, the In Harmony Project in England, The University of South Africa, and The Teatro De Bellas Artes

in Cali, Colombia. The ensemble's residency in Havana, Cuba for the Cuban American Youth Orchestra in January 2019 was the first by an American string quartet since the revolution.

Catalyst Quartet members hold degrees from The Cleveland Institute of Music, The Juilliard School, The Curtis Institute of Music, and New England Conservatory. Catalyst Quartet is a Sphinx ensemble and proudly endorses Pirastro strings. Learn more at catalystquartet.com.



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Land Acknowledgement

Middlebury College sits on land which has served as a site of meeting and exchange among indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The Western Abenaki are the traditional caretakers of these Vermont lands and waters, which they call Ndaकिनna, or "homeland." We remember their connection to this region and the hardships they continue to endure. We give thanks for the opportunity to share in the bounty of this place and to protect it.

Patrons are requested to turn off all electronic devices prior to the performance, and to please refrain from texting. Photography and the use of audio or video equipment are prohibited.