An abstract painting with a textured, layered appearance. It features several overlapping circular and semi-circular shapes in shades of white, grey, and brown. The background is a mix of dark, earthy tones like black, brown, and red, with splatters of lighter colors like yellow, orange, and pink. The overall effect is one of depth and complexity.

WISCONSIN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

HARMONY IN BLACK

COMPOSERS


Patrice Rushen
Dr. William Banfield

CONDUCTOR

Andrew Sewell



Albany
CLASSICAL



Harmony in Black is part of a five-year initiative for the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra (WCO) titled Musical Landscapes in Color. Falling under the new Composer Collective series, this initiative aims to elevate the voices of an array of living, diverse composers throughout the United States.

What will orchestras be playing 10, 50, or 100 years from now?

With a long-standing commitment to artistic excellence and inclusivity, the WCO has continually pushed boundaries to champion a diverse range of voices within the realm of classical music. The Composer Collective seeks to shift the paradigm from what has been to what will be. Why? We believe that you can inspire a better community through music. It's what drives us forward as we create compelling and entertaining performances for our audiences. Why these composers and why now? Because it's about so much more than just the music. It's about taking in new perspectives and layers of sound that have been inspired by the impulses of modern culture. These contemporary musical landscapes connect us to the times we live in. We hope you enjoy the works these composers have brought to life as much as we do.

Joe Loehnis, CEO

For more information on the Composer Collective, visit us online at wcoconcerts.org/composer-collective.

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Artwork by Jerry Butler

For more information on Jerry, visit wcoconcerts.org/harmony-artwork



COMPOSERS

Patrice Rushen

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RUSHEN | Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory

I. Passion from the Pulpit

II. The Dreamer Cometh

III. Freedom Is Not Free

BANFIELD | Testimony of Tone, Tune and Time

I. Introit

II. Testimony

III. Awake

IV. Hymn of the People

V. We Dance

VI. We Love

VII. We Don't Know

VIII. Walk Away this Time

Paul Higginbotham, narrator

Matthew Sintchak, saxophone

BANFIELD | Symphony No. 8

I. Triumph

II. Trial

III. Resolution: Here I Stand

For the narration text visit

wcoconcerts.org/harmony-narration

MUSICIAN ROSTER

Violin I

Suzanne Beia+

Leanne Kelso++

Cindy Whip

Hillary Hempel

Sherri Zhang

Xavier Pleindoux

Violin II

Gerald Loughney*

Tim Kamps

Anna Carlson

Wes Luke

Clayton Tillotson

Viola

Nora Frisk*

Diedre Buckley

Janse Vincent

Chris Dozoryst

Cello

Karl Lavine*

Timothy Archbold

Trace Johnson

Bass

Victor Stahoviak*

David Scholl

Flute

Brandon LePage*

Dawn Lawler

Vanessa Lopez

Piccolo

Dawn Lawler

Vanessa Lopez

Oboe

Lindsay Flowers*

Izumi Amemiya

English Horn

Izumi Amemiya

Clarinet

JJ Koh*

Brian Gnojek

Bass Clarinet

Brian Gnojek

Bassoon

Midori Samson*

Carol Rosing

Contrabassoon

Carol Rosing

Horn

Linda Kimball*

Bill Muir

Dafydd Bevil

Ricardo Almeida

Trumpet

Matthew Onstad*

Robert Rohlfing

John Wagner

Trombone

Matthew Bragstad*

Benjamin Skroch

William Akers

Tuba

Tom Curry*

Percussion

Lana Wordel*

Nick Bonaccio

Andrew Cierny

Carl Storniolo

Timpani

Kent Barnhart*

Piano

Beth Wilson*

Harp

Serena Brouillette*

+ Concertmaster

++ Asst. Concertmaster

* Principal



NARRATION

Frederick Douglass, Paul Robeson and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are three towering figures whose shadow over American history is so long and enduring that first names are not needed when one references them. While each of these men frames a different epoch in the long historical arc of the black struggle for civil rights and social justice in America, they are linked systemically and culturally.

In the most elemental way they reflect how the ideological tentacles of that movement spread beyond the geographical and political boundaries of America and intertwined with the plight of marginalized populations around the world. Their expansive visions of liberation and justice became part of the modern tapestry of social and labor movements worldwide. In respective order, they represented the creation, cultivation, and progression of an aesthetic of resistance that was not only grounded in the oratory of the Black Church, but also the cadence and power of black music. It was their individual engagement with the Negro spiritual that is of particular note. Identified as the essence of black folk identity, the spiritual documented the experiences of the enslaved and captured their theorization of liberation through a reworking of Eurocentric theology. Unmasking the invocation, performance, and promotion of the spiritual by Douglass, Robeson, and King illuminates not only the transition of those songs from the praise houses to the concert stage to the mass meeting and moments of resistance, but how they are the foundation of black liberation ideology.

The three compositions contained on this album do not quote spiritual melodies directly. However, they do embody the spirit of those songs by drawing either on direct quotation of speeches or writings or references the milieu that these songs existed in beyond the enslaved experience. Most importantly, these works illuminate just how intertwined historically, culturally, and spiritually Frederick Douglass, Paul Robeson and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were in their pursuit of freedom and social justice.

“This they would sing, as a chorus, to words which to many would seem unmeaning jargon, but which, nevertheless, were full of meaning to themselves. I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress some minds with the horrible character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes of philosophy on the subject could do.”—Frederick Douglass

William Banfield’s *Testimony of Tone, Tune and Time* and *Here I Stand* consider the legacy of Frederick Douglass and Paul Robeson respectively. The former draws extensively on the writings and oratory of Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), who was born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey on the Eastern shore of Maryland. As with many enslaved people, Bailey experienced the brutalities of slavery from the very beginning of his life. He writes vividly in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, published in 1845, of this trauma and how his desire for freedom was birthed out of the benevolence of Sophia Auld, the wife of his master’s brother, who began teaching him how to read and write. Although, she discontinued this activity, on the advice of her husband, Bailey continued to find ways to build on this foundation. He bribed neighborhood children with bread to teach him their lessons, observed the lessons of his master’s son, and later modeled the writing of those whom he worked for and with. In 1838 Bailey made his escape to New York, where he changed his surname to Douglass, and eventually married Anna Murray, a free black woman whom he had fallen in love with while living and working in Baltimore. The couple eventually settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where Douglass became a strong advocate for the rights of the enslaved and later freedmen. Characterized by William Banfield as an “instrumental concerto,” *Testimony of Tone, Tune and Time* tropes the power, cadence and enduring legacy of Douglass’ ideology of liberation through three main mediums—saxophone, orchestra and spoken narration. The saxophone soloist represents the strong, defiant and soulful spirit of Douglass, while the narrators share boldly his message to the world. The orchestra symbolizes the world that surrounded Douglass.

“My music is a vehicle for my beliefs, a way to inspire change in the hearts and minds of people.”—Paul Robeson

Whether it was in the classroom, athletic field, theatre stage or concert hall, Paul Robeson embodied the notion of Black exceptionalism that underscored DuBois' theory of the Talented Tenth and its ability to uplift the black race. His career as an actor and singer began just as the Harlem Renaissance was taking shape. His performances in the plays *The Empire Jones* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings* brought him early acclaim. But Robeson was also gifted with an extraordinary bass-baritone voice. His engagement with global folksong repertory, alongside the work of Roland Hayes, Marian Anderson, and Lawrence Brown, helped establish the spiritual as part of the concert repertory.

Robeson's growing popularity as an artist led to a successful stint in England. Robeson's engagement with diverse social and intellectual circles exposed him to the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist movements in Europe and Africa. These interactions significantly shaped his political consciousness so much so that by the time he returned to America in the 1930s, he had morphed into a quintessential artist-activist. Even as the political milieu of America changed in the ensuing years, and it became personally, and professionally dangerous, Robeson remained committed to his beliefs.

Although identified as a symphony, *Here I Stand* does not follow convention. In three movements, Banfield characterizes Robeson's evolution from celebrated artist to vilified activist to his restoration as one of the prominent voices in the global struggle against racism and tyranny.

“The freedom songs are playing a strong and vital role in our struggle. They give the people new courage and a sense of unity. I think they keep alive a faith, a radiant hope, in the future, particularly in our most trying hours.”—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As one of the leading personalities that emerged out of the mid-century black civil rights struggle, King's adaptation of a strategy of direct action, non-violent resistance that was anchored by the practice of freedom singing, and the cultivation of a multi-racial, multi-generation coalition of organizations and constituents provided a template for the modern social movement. Patrice Rushen's orchestral work *Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory* takes us into the interior of the movement. “I was a child during that era of the Civil Rights Movement, but I could tell from the reactions of my parents and other older

people, that this man was of great significance, and his cause was important and serious. Later, as I grew up, I came to realize the significance of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the principles on which he stood.”

Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory centers on three aspects of King’s life. The first movement, “Passion From The Pulpit,” illuminates the relationship that existed between King’s faith, church, and activism. Like Frederick Douglass, the cadence and song-like phrasing that underscores King’s speeches was rooted in black sermonic traditions. The composer characterizes this connection in the gospel-influenced motives and rhythms, as well as an emotional buildup that was emblematic of the ecstatic nature of black worship practices.

For the second movement, entitled “The Dreamer Cometh,” Rushen drew inspiration from the iconic *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*. The musical themes attempt to portray the tension that surrounded the progression of the movement in the early 1960s into a form of embodied resistance that often resulted in violence and death. “One feels when one’s commitment lands them in a place where their actions have reached a point where they cannot stop or turn around,” Rushen writes. “Does progress have a price? What must be sacrificed for the “greater good”? Who is affected by those choices? Can I go on? Is it worth jail, beatings, injury, death? Am I helping or hurting my people?”

The final movement, *Freedom Is Not Free*, reflects the power of commitment and acceptance, as Dr. King chose to continue his work in the late 1960s even in the wake of criticism, the dissolution of the coalition that jettisoned the movement only years earlier, and the violence directed at him as the movement shifted its focus to the urban cities in the North. Rushen states that the music represents “a steadiness... A march... literally... towards that which represented unity and freedom and the possibilities for racial justice and equality. The triumph of those ideas [was] within Dr. King’s grasp, although he recognized the danger. I may not get there with you, but we as a people will get to the ‘promised land’, he said.”

Notes provided by Dr. Tammy L Kernodle, for more information on her please visit wcoconcerts.org/harmony-notes.

Dr. William Banfield

COMPOSER

In the past 25+ years, Bill Banfield has produced a body of productive music/arts scholarship activities, books, compositions, recordings, establishing an active teaching, student and music/lecture programming development, professional service and creative work, that contributes to contemporary arts leadership.

Banfield was appointed in 2019 as a research associate with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH), one of the Smithsonian's 12 research and cultural centers. His work focuses on what he identifies as cultural through-lines, delineating the ways in which contemporary artistry and new works harken back and hold onto critical cultural linkages to understand.

Having served three times as a Pulitzer Prize judge in American music (2010, 2016, 2020), Banfield is an award winning composer whose symphonies, operas, chamber works have been performed and recorded by major symphonies across the country. Few have a wider, performed professional composing output, that has had public concert performances, reviews, radio, recordings of some 12 symphonies, 7 opera, 9 concerti, chamber, jazz and popular forms. This alone makes Banfield one of the most performed, recorded composers of his generation. Banfield has been a national public radio show host having served as arts and culture correspondent for The Tavis Smiley Show.

Learn more at billbanfieldmusic.com



Patrice Rushen

COMPOSER

Multi-Grammy nominated artist, Patrice Rushen, is fashioning her career after the legacy of her long-time friend and mentor, Quincy Jones. Composer...Producer... International Recording Artist...Rushen has definitely earned the respect she has been awarded by her peers in the music industry.

Admired by many for her groundbreaking achievements, Rushen has amassed an impressive list of "firsts". She was the first woman to serve as Musical Director for the 46th, 47th & 48th Annual Grammy Awards, the first woman in 43 years to serve as Head Composer/Musical Director for television's highest honor, the Emmy Awards and the first woman Musical Director of the NAACP Image Awards, an honor she held for 12 consecutive years. Rushen has also been the only woman Musical Director/Composer for the Peoples Choice Awards and HBO's Comic Relief. She was the only woman Musical Director/Conductor/Arranger for a late-night television talk show. The show was The Midnight Hour, which aired on CBS. In addition, Rushen was named the Musical Director/Composer for Newsweek's first American Achievement Awards, broadcast from the Kennedy Center and she served as the Musical Director for Janet Jackson's World Tour, "janet." As the Musical Director for the award shows, she composed and performed special musical tributes to Michael Landon, Ted Turner, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, The Temptations, James Garner and Leonard Bernstein to name a few.

Learn more at patricerushen.com



Andrew Sewell

Music Director

Maestro Sewell enters his twenty-fourth season as music director of the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and seventh season with the San Luis Obispo Symphony, having had long tenures with the Wichita, Toledo, and Mansfield, Ohio Symphonies.

Known for his innovative programming and discovering new talent, Sewell is a highly skilled orchestra builder with a wide knowledge and range of repertoire. In demand as a guest conductor, he has led the Toronto, Detroit, Milwaukee, Columbus, Syracuse, Illinois, Monterey, Gulf Coast, and Eugene Symphony Orchestras, the Florida Orchestra as well as the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, Christchurch Symphony, National Symphony of Mexico, Kyushu Symphony (Japan), City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong, OK Mozart Festival, WI Peninsula Music Festival, and Masterworks Festivals in the US and London.

A native of New Zealand, Maestro Sewell received his music training on the violin, piano, and cornet, and began conducting at age 16. Six years later, he made his professional opera debut with the Mercury Opera and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. Winning the Australian Guarantee Corporation's Young Achiever's Award allowed him to further his studies abroad. Sewell holds a Master of Music degree with Honors in Conducting from the University of Michigan.

Over the years Andrew has been credited with numerous awards for services to music including the 2017 Service to Music Award from the Association of Wisconsin Symphony Orchestras, the 2013 Rabin Arts Youth Award for Individual Achievement by the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras, the 2005 Best Individual Artist Award by Wichita Arts Council, and 2005 Musician of the Year by the Wisconsin State Journal, for services to music and the greater arts community.

While not conducting, Andrew enjoys cycling the backroads of Wisconsin and San Luis Obispo and visiting family in New Zealand. He and his wife, Mary, have three grown children and reside in Madison.





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