

Yale SCHOOL OF MUSIC

José García-León, Dean

Yale Philharmonia

Peter Oundjian, *principal conductor*

Samuel Hollister, *conductor*

Jillian Tate, *soprano*

Finn Sagal, *narrator*

Thursday, November 16, 2023 | 7:30 p.m.
Woolsey Hall

Program

Valerie Coleman
b. 1970

Umoja (Anthem of Unity) (2019)

Samuel Hollister, *conductor*

Adolphus Hailstork
b. 1941

JFK: The Last Speech (2023)

Jillian Tate, *soprano*
Finn Sagal, *narrator*

INTERMISSION

Joan Tower
b. 1938

Concerto for Orchestra (1991)

As a courtesy to others, please silence all devices. Photography and recording of any kind is strictly prohibited. Please do not leave the hall during musical selections. Thank you.

Text

JFK: The Last Speech

HAILSTORK

*O hushed October morning mild,
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;
Tomorrow's wind. if it be wild,
Should waste them all.
The crows above the forest call;
Tomorrow they may form and go,
O hushed October morning mild,
Begin the hours of this day slow.
Make the day seem to us less brief.*

Privilege is here, and with privilege goes responsibility...

There is inherited wealth in this country and also inherited poverty. And unless graduates...who are given a running start in life – unless they are willing to put back into our society those talents, the broad sympathy, the understanding, the compassion – unless they're willing to put those qualities back into the service of the Great Republic, then obviously the pre-suppositions upon which our democracy are based are bound to be fallible...the need is endless, and I'm confident that you will respond.

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Today this College and country honors a man whose contribution was not to our size but to our spirit, not to our political beliefs but to our insight, not to our self-esteem, but to our self-comprehension. ...

Our national strength matters, but the spirit which informs and controls our strength matters just as much. This was the special significance of Robert Frost... He held a deep faith in the spirit of man.

*And God has taken a flower of gold
And broken it, and used therefrom
The mystic link to bind and hold
Spirit to matter till death come.*

The men who create power make an indispensable contribution to the nation's greatness, but the men who question power make a contribution just as indispensable, especially when that questioning is disinterested, for they determine whether we use power or power uses us...

It's hardly an accident that Robert Frost coupled poetry and power, for he saw poetry as the means of saving power from itself. When power leads man towards arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of his existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses. For art establishes the basic human truths which must serve as the touchstone of our judgment.

*There is a call to life a little sterner...
It makes the prophet in us all presage
The glory of a next Augustan age...
A golden age of poetry and power
Of which this noonday's the beginning
hour.**

Text, cont.

[Robert Frost] brought an unsparing instinct for reality to bear on the platitudes and pieties of society. His sense of the human tragedy fortified him against self-deception and easy consolation. "I have been," he wrote, "one acquainted with the night." And because he knew the midnight as well as the high noon, because he understood the ordeal as well as the triumph of the human spirit, he gave his age strength with which to overcome despair.

*I have walked out in rain – and back in
rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.
I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to
explain.
I have been one acquainted with the night.*

The great artist is a solitary figure. He has, as Frost said, a lover's quarrel with the world. ... If sometimes our great artists have been the most critical of our society, it is because their sensitivity and their concern for justice which must motivate any true artist. ... The nation which disdains the mission of art invites the fate of Robert Frost's hired man, the fate of having nothing to look backward to with pride and nothing to look forward to with hope.

*Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with
pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different.*

If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him. We must never forget that art is not a form of propaganda; it is a form of truth... [In] democratic society... the highest duty of the writer, the composer, the artist is to remain true to himself and to let the chips fall where they may. In serving his vision of the truth, the artist best serves his nation.

*Anything more than the truth would have
seemed too weak
To the earnest love that laid the swale in
rows...
The fact is the sweetest dream that labor
knows.
My long scythe whispered and left the hay
to make.*

I look forward to a great future for America – a future in which our country will match its military strength with our moral restraint, its wealth with our wisdom, its power with our purpose. ... I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft. ... And I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization as well.

*The woods are lovely dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

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* Excerpt from “Dedication” by Robert Frost from *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, ed. Edward Connery Lathem.

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Artist Profiles

Peter Oundjian, *principal conductor*

Toronto-born conductor Peter Oundjian has been an instrumental figure in the rebirth of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since his appointment as Music Director in 2004. In addition to conducting the orchestra in dynamic performances that have achieved significant artistic acclaim, he has been greatly involved in a variety of new initiatives that have strengthened the ensemble’s presence in the community and attracted a young and diverse audience.

In addition to his post in Toronto, from which he stepped down in 2018, Oundjian served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra from 2006 to 2010 and played a major role at the Caramoor International Music Festival in New York between 1997 and 2007. In 2012 he was appointed Music Director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Oundjian was the first violinist of the renowned Tokyo String Quartet, a position he held for fourteen years. Since 1981, he

has been on the Yale School of Music faculty. He was awarded the School’s Samuel Simons Sanford Medal for distinguished service to music in 2013 and named Principal Conductor of the Yale Philharmonia in 2015. He is Professor (adjunct) of Music and Orchestral Conducting at the School of Music.

Yale Philharmonia

The Yale Philharmonia is one of America’s foremost music-school ensembles. The largest performing group at the Yale School of Music, the Philharmonia offers superb training in orchestral playing and repertoire.

Performances include an annual series of concerts in Woolsey Hall, as well as Yale Opera productions in the Shubert Theatre. The Yale Philharmonia has also performed on numerous occasions in Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York City and at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Jillian Tate, *soprano*

Jillian Tate is a soprano currently pursuing her Master of Music degree at Yale University under the tutelage of Gerald Martin Moore. This past summer she attended the prestigious Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, where she studied under leading industry professionals. Recently she appeared in Yale Opera Scenes as Peter in Joel Thompson’s *The Snowy Day*, Soeur Constance in Poulenc’s *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and Barbarina in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*.

Artist Profiles, *cont.*

Later this year Tate will perform Laetitia in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* with Yale Opera, and will be the soprano soloist in Margaret Bonds's *The Ballad of the Brown King* with the Greater New Haven Community Chorus. Additionally, she was honored to be a finalist in the inaugural Duncan Williams Voice Competition in February. Prior to attending Yale, Tate performed with Opera Carolina as a soloist in Douglas Tappin's *I Dream*, and in the chorus of Verdi's *Aida*. She earned her Bachelor of Music in 2021 from the University of Maryland where she studied with mezzo-soprano Delores Ziegler. During her time at the University of Maryland, Tate was a featured soloist at the Kennedy Center's Reach Opening Festival as an alumna of the Washington National Opera Institute.

Finn Sagal, *narrator*

Finn Sagal is a bass-baritone who won the 2017 Songbook Academy Competition, after which he performed with singers such as Michael Feinstein, Liza Minnelli, and Kristin Chenoweth. Sagal earned an undergraduate degree in vocal performance at UCLA, where he sang the role of Pluton in *La descente d'Orphée aux enfers* by Charpentier, Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* by Stravinsky.

Sagal is pursuing his M.M. at the Yale School of Music studying with Gerald Martin Moore. With Yale Opera he played the role of Junius in Yale Opera's production of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* and

the Tutor in *Le Comte Ory*, and he will sing Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* in 2024. In 2024–2025 Sagal will join the Ryan Opera Center training program at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Samuel Hollister, *conductor*

Conductor, pianist, harpsichordist, composer, and theorist Samuel Hollister believes that music tells powerful stories that create and strengthen communities. He serves as the Music Director of the Civic Orchestra of New Haven, and in 2022 he joined the faculty of the University of Rhode Island as the interim Director of Orchestral Activities. Currently pursuing a D.M.A. in orchestral conducting at the Yale School of Music, Hollister serves as conducting fellow for the Yale Philharmonia and as the assistant to Peter Oundjian. Hollister holds two master's degrees in orchestral conducting and music theory pedagogy from Peabody Conservatory, where he studied with Marin Alsop. While an undergraduate in music and mathematics at Yale, he conducted the Saybrook College Orchestra and concert productions of Mozart's Requiem and Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*. He has conducted world premieres of opera and concert music at Yale, Peabody, the University of Rhode Island, with the PHACE ensemble in Vienna, and elsewhere around the world. He conducted and arranged the Peabody Opera's 2020 production of Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, bringing singers together virtually even as the world grappled with a pandemic. He joined the music staff of Opera Saratoga in 2022 as

Program Notes

a conductor and pianist and was named a conducting fellow at the Eastern Music Festival in 2019, returning on invitation in 2021. In 2018 Hollister founded Aurora Collaborative, a Rhode Island nonprofit music organization, to provide opportunities for musicians and artists of any age or background to collaborate and communicate their own musical narratives.

Umoja (Anthem of Unity)

COLEMAN

Note by the composer

In its original form, *Umoja*, the Swahili word for Unity and the first principle of the African Diaspora holiday Kwanzaa, was composed as a simple song for women's choir. It embodied a sense of "tribal unity," through the feel of a drum circle, the sharing of history through traditional "call and response" form, and the repetition of a memorable sing-song melody. It was rearranged into woodwind quintet form during the genesis of Coleman's chamber music ensemble, Imani Winds, with the intent of providing an anthem that celebrated the diverse heritages of the ensemble itself.

Almost two decades later from the original, the orchestral version brings an expansion and sophistication to the short and sweet melody, beginning with sustained ethereal passages that float and shift from a bowed vibraphone, supporting the introduction of the melody by solo violin. Here the melody is sweetly singing in its simplest form with an earnest reminiscence of Appalachian style music. From there, the melody dances and weaves throughout the instrument families, interrupted by dissonant viewpoints led by the brass and percussion sections, which represent the clash of injustices, racism, and hate that threatens to gain a foothold in the world today. Spiky textures turn into an aggressive exchange between upper woodwinds and percussion, before a return to the melody as a gentle reminder of

Program Notes, *cont.*

kindness and humanity. Through the brass led ensemble tutti, the journey ends with a bold call of unity that harkens back to the original anthem. *Umoja* has seen the creation of many versions, that are like siblings to one another, similar in many ways, but each with a unique voice that is informed by Coleman's ever evolving creativity and perspective.

This version honors the simple melody that ever was, but is now a full exploration into the meaning of freedom and unity. Now more than ever, *Umoja* has to ring as a strong and beautiful anthem for the world we live in today.

JFK: The Last Speech

HAILSTORK

Note by the composer

My plan is to set supporting music to John F. Kennedy's words to be presented by a reader and to set selections from the poetry of Robert Frost to be sung by either a soprano or tenor.

My writing will reflect the autumn season, the solemnity of the moment, the unique oratorical gifts of Kennedy the president, and the profound literary gifts of Frost the poet.

Concerto for Orchestra

TOWER

Note by the composer

Concerto for Orchestra begins slowly, quietly, and simply, on a unison F-sharp that emerges from the depths of the orchestra. I had imagined a long and large

landscape that had a feeling of space and distance. From the beginning I wanted to convey this sense to let the listener understand that the proportions of the piece would be spacious and that the musical materials would travel a long road.

The energy of the piece emerges through the contrast of big alternating chords with little fast motives. These take on bigger and bigger shapes, picking up larger textures as they whirl around in fast repeated figures. There is a strong sense of direction in this piece, as in all my music, and a feeling of ascent, which comes not only from the scale motives, but from tempos, rhythms, and dynamics that cooperate to produce the different intensities.

Although it had been my intention to write a work in two parts, the content of the musical materials led me to a different form. Instead of coming to a full halt at the climactic midpoint of the composition, I felt the arrival could be answered and connected by a series of unisons (on the note B) traversing the orchestral palette. This reaction calms things down, carries the piece forward towards its slow central section, and provides a seam that harks back toward the unison opening of the work and connects the 30-minute span of the concerto. Unity between the two halves is also provided by the slow-fast structure and by several shared motives, particularly the four-note motive that appears early in the piece and shapes the final fast section.

In every sense, Concerto for Orchestra is my biggest work to date. It's the first piece

Staff

purely for orchestra I've written since *Silver Ladders* in 1986, but it follows three solo concertos — for clarinet, flute, and violin — and reflects that experience, enabling me to take more risks between soloists and orchestra. Whereas *Silver Ladders* highlighted four solo instruments, here not only solos, but duos, trios, and other combinations of instruments form structural, timbral, and emotive elements of the piece. As in all my music, I am working here on motivating the structure, trying to be sensitive to how an idea reacts to or results from the previous ideas in the strongest and most natural way — a lesson I've learned from studying the music of Beethoven. Although technically demanding, the virtuoso sections are an integral part of the music, resulting from accumulated energy, rather than being designed purely as display elements. I thus resisted the title *Concerto for Orchestra* (with its connotations of Bartók, Lutoslawski, and Husa), and named the work only after the composing was completed, and even then reluctantly.

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Peter Oundjian, *principal conductor*

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Patrick Curtis
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FLUTE

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Daniel Fletcher
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OBOE

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Amy Kim ³
Will Stevens
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Nickolas Hamblin ³

BASS CLARINET

Nicole Martin

BASSOON

Winfred Felton ¹
Kennedy Plains ^{2 3}
Tucker Van Gundy

HORN

Gretchen Berendt ²
Torrin Hallett
Franco Augusto Ortiz ¹
Oved Rico
Braydon Ross

William Sands
Corey Schmidt ³
Amber Wang ¹

TRUMPET

Jonathan Hunda
Grace O'Connell ³
William Rich ¹
Jacob Rose ²

TROMBONE

Yuki Mori ³
Jude Morris
David Seder ^{2 1}

BASS TROMBONE

Jackson Murphy

TUBA

Connor Higley

TIMPANI

Mingyu Son

PERCUSSION

Chad Beebe ¹
Jessie Chiang
Han Xia

HARP

Subin Lee ¹
Yun Chai Lee ^{2 3}

PIANO

Jieun Park
Elisabeth Tsai

¹ *principal on Coleman*

² *principal on Hailstork*

³ *principal on Tower*

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List as of November 9, 2023

Upcoming Events at YSM

NOV 17 **Yale Voxtet with The Sebastians**

Institute of Sacred Music

7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall

Free admission

NOV 19 **Matthias Maierhofer, organ**

ISM Great Organ Music at Yale

7:30 p.m. | Woolsey Hall

Free admission

NOV 26 **Daniel S. See, Baroque violin & Jeffrey Grossman, harpsichord**

Faculty Artist Series

3 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall

Free admission

NOV 28 **Vista: Chamber Music**

YSM Ensembles

7:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall

Free admission

NOV 29 **Lunchtime Chamber Music**

12:30 p.m. | Morse Recital Hall

Free admission

DEC 2 **Clarinet Studio Recital**

YSM Ensembles

4:30 p.m. | Sudler Recital Hall

Free admission

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