

Concert Quick Guide[®]

The American Spirit

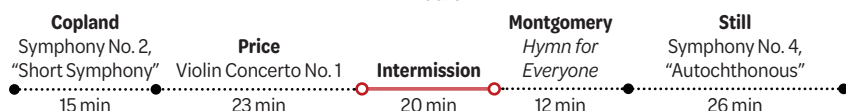
SAT 10/17/26 at 7 pm

Performance #342 Season 12, Concert 6
Fisher Center at Bard Sosnoff Theater

KELLEN GRAY *conductor*

CONCERT TIMELINE

2 hours



Brief remarks by Shan (Serena) Bai *violin*



Aaron Copland

Born 11/14/1900 in Brooklyn

Died 12/2/1990 at age 90 in Peekskill, NY

Symphony No. 2, "Short Symphony"

♩ = 144 (incisivo) (incisive and sharp) 4 min

♩ = circa 44 5 min

♩ = 144 (preciso e ritmico) (precise and rhythmic) 6 min

No pause between movements

Written 1933, at age 33

Premiered 11/23/1934 in Mexico City; Orquesta
Sinfónica de México; Carlos Chávez *conductor*



Florence Price

Born 4/9/1887 in Little Rock, AR

Died 6/3/1953 at age 66 in Chicago

Violin Concerto No. 1

Tempo moderato (at a moderate tempo) 13 min

Andante (moderately slow) 5 min

Allegro (fast) 5 min

MELISSA WHITE *violin*

Written 1939, at age 52

Premiered 2018; Arkansas Philharmonic Orchestra;
Er-Gene Kahng *violin*; Ryan Cockerham *conductor*

Intermission

MEET & GREET some of the musicians in the lobby

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Brief remarks by **Craig Swink** *clarinet*



Jessie Montgomery

Born 12/8/1981 in New York City

Hymn for Everyone

Written 2021, at age 39

Premiered 4/28/2022 in Chicago; Chicago Symphony Orchestra; Riccardo Muti
conductor



William Grant Still

Born 5/11/1895 in Woodville, MS

Died 12/3/1978 at age 83 in Los Angeles

Symphony No. 4, “Autochthonous”

Moderately fast—the spirit of optimism and energy *6 min*

Slowly—pensive, then animated in a folksy way
7 min

Moderately fast—humorously, the American idiom *3 min*

Slowly and reverently—the spiritual love of mankind *10 min*

Written 1947, at age 52

Premiered 3/18/1951; Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra; Victor Alessandro *conductor*



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The American Spirit

SAT 10/17/26 at 7 pm

Performance #342 Season 12, Concert 6

Fisher Center at Bard Sosnoff Theater

The Music

AARON COPLAND'S SYMPHONY NO. 2, "SHORT SYMPHONY"

Notes by TÖN keyboardist Francis Chung-Yang Huang

Copland's Second Symphony is called the "Short Symphony" because it's only 15 minutes long. However, this piece is only short in its length; in ambition and in the oeuvre of Copland, it is certainly a grand item.

Copland, after studying with Nadia Boulanger in France and getting acquainted with then-brand-new methods like serialism and the twelve-tone technique, came back to the U.S. in 1924 to be a music freelancer in New York, and set out to create an American equivalent of modernist music. He debuted and was put on the map by the premiere of his First Symphony, "The Organ Symphony," in New York in 1925.

After working on the Second Symphony for two years, conductors Leopold Stokowski and Serge Koussevitzky both declined to premiere it because it was simply too hard to play. The premiere took place in Mexico City in 1934 after a good amount of rehearsals, conducted by Copland's friend, Carlos Chávez. Copland had actually just spent time in Mexico with Chávez in 1932

while working on the symphony, and the trip inspired him to incorporate traditional Mexican elements into the finale.

Ten years passed until the first American premiere in 1944. Four decades later, in a 1981 interview, Copland was asked which of his pieces he would have wanted to be played more. His answer was, "I have a piece called the Short Symphony... It's one of the very best pieces I ever wrote, and it has never caught on, for reasons not quite clear to me."

The symphony comprises three short movements, played without pause. The form of the movements is simple and classical. The rhythm and harmonies, however, are complicated, often sounding like two forms at the same time. A jazz element can also be found in the rhythm of the piece, namely in the usage of polyrhythm, which was a staple of jazz at the time. Copland said about the rhythms in the symphony, "I like to think of them as being in some way American. Their rhythmic life is definitely American, and influenced by jazz, although there are no literal quotations. I wouldn't have thought of those rhythms, particularly in the Short Symphony, if I hadn't had a jazz orientation."

FLORENCE PRICE'S VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 1

Notes by TÖN violinist Shan (Serena) Bai

For 70 years, Florence Price's Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major remained a voice waiting to be heard. Written in 1939, the concerto was largely unknown until 2009, when a collection of Price's manuscripts was discovered in her former summer home in St. Anne, Illinois, including both of her violin concertos. Its rediscovery brought the concerto back into the musical world, revealing a musical language rooted in the Romantic tradition, yet distinctly Price's own.

The first movement has a strong sense of storytelling. From the beginning, I hear echoes of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D major, a connection that returns near the end, where the coda feels almost like an homage to Tchaikovsky. There is a sweeping Romantic quality to the writing, with lyrical melodies, virtuosic passages, and expansive orchestral interludes. I especially love the way the solo violin interacts with the brass and woodwinds, with melodies passing between them almost like a conversation. This sense of dialogue also seems to extend to the different musical styles within the movement. Alongside its Romantic character, Price introduces syncopation and blues- and jazz-inflected gestures, giving the music a freer, more improvisatory quality. I enjoy hearing how these different musical influences come together throughout the movement.

The second movement is my favorite part of the concerto. Its long, singing violin lines and warm, nostalgic atmosphere give it an almost cinematic quality. The lyrical writing reminds me of the second movement of Korngold's Violin Concerto, and it also brings to mind the atmosphere of classic Hollywood romantic films like *Roman Holiday*. When I listen to this movement, I often picture scenes from the film: the elegant scenery, the slow and gentle romance, and the sense of nostalgia with

just a little sadness underneath. It feels like an old film unfolding in front of me.

The final movement suddenly changes the atmosphere. Short, energetic, and almost constantly in motion, it has the character of a playful perpetual motion. After the expansive first movement and the lyrical second, this light and spirited finale brings the concerto to a concise and exciting close.

JESSIE MONTGOMERY'S HYMN FOR EVERYONE

Notes by TÖN bassoonist Peter Houdalis

Jessie Montgomery has quickly risen to become one of the premiere American classical composers of the decade. She began her compositional career at NYU in 2012, and since then has accumulated numerous accolades and commissions from many major orchestras worldwide. In 2021, she was appointed as the Meade Composer in Residence of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. It was through this appointment that her *Hymn For Everyone* came to be.

The piece began as an orchestral suite commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2021. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Montgomery was dealing with writer's block and began questioning her views on Western classical music. Then, spurred on by the death of her mother, she completely reworked the suite and centered the piece around a hymn she had written in 2020.

The lyrical hymn is the centerpiece of the work. It is introduced plainly by the viola and french horn, then travels throughout each section of the orchestra. Jessie describes the piece as a meditation for orchestra in which she transforms the hymn theme through timbral changes using different instrumentations.

A similar concept can be heard in Ravel's *Bolero*, where he takes two melodic ideas and develops them strictly through

orchestration. Instead of the snare rhythm that underpins *Bolero* and characterises it as a Spanish dance, Montgomery uses a different style. The hymn is accompanied by a slow, descending scale that repeats and intensifies as the hymn's texture is strengthened throughout the orchestra.

WILLIAM GRANT STILL'S SYMPHONY NO. 4, "AUTOCHTHONOUS"

Notes by TÖN flutist Youbeen Cho

William Grant Still began writing his Fourth Symphony in the summer of 1947, not long after coming home to Los Angeles from Oberlin College, where he'd just received an honorary doctorate. He later described it simply: he found a strong musical idea, and he developed it. That's not quite the whole story, though—he worked on the piece almost every day through August, and within just over a month, the score was finished.

The title "Autochthonous" means something like "native" or "sprung from the soil." Read literally, it might sound like a nod to Indigenous peoples or traditions. But that's not what Still meant. He wasn't trying to depict any single group's culture. What he wanted was something harder to pin down: the many roots of American life, tangled

together, growing out of the same ground across every culture and race. The result is a portrait of a shared identity: plural, unresolved, grown from common soil.

The symphony unfolds in four movements. Blues and folk idioms run through it, but the frame is still recognizably European and symphonic. The first movement moves forward with real drive—optimistic, almost stubborn, the sound of getting things done. Then the mood shifts. A plaintive oboe opens the second movement; the violins briefly cut in with an echo of the first movement's theme, then fall back into quieter, tender passages. Warmth and compassion, not grandeur. The third movement lightens things again—graceful, but with humor running just under the surface. And the finale slows down entirely. It reaches upward, devotional, almost prayerful: Americans looking for solace, for something like renewal.

What remains, in the end, is tribute. A tribute to people who rose with dignity out of hardship and oppression rooted in this very land. And maybe a quiet challenge, too—because at a moment when conflict and division still cut so deep, it's worth asking how many different roots actually built what we call American identity.

The Artists

KELLEN GRAY *conductor*



Tamara Benavente

Born and raised in Rock Hill, SC, conductor Kellen Gray is one of the foremost experts and interpreters of the music of African-diasporic composers, for whom he is a passionate advocate and champion.

Since September 2024, Gray serves as conductor & artistic director of the Lafayette Symphony Orchestra (Indiana). This follows from a position as associate artist of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (2023–24), a newly created role that saw him conduct, curate, and present programs across the RSNO's series offerings.

Recent and forthcoming guest conducting highlights include engagements with the Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Houston Symphonies; Minnesota Orchestra; National Symphony Orchestra (D.C.); and Seattle Opera; among others. Gray also works with such U.K. orchestras as the BBC National Orchestra of Wales; BBC, London, and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras; and the RSNO.

Gray credits the many folk music styles of the south-eastern United States as his earliest and most impactful musical influences, and his repertoire interests to date have been fueled by the engaged pursuit of that same spirit of cultural authenticity. A passionate champion for African-diasporic composers, he was the founder and curator of Charleston Symphony's Project Aurora: a programming and performance initiative

aiming to illustrate the importance of African American arts and culture as equally valuable to its European equivalent. Additionally, he serves as assistant editor and conductor liaison for the African Diaspora Music Project.

Gray's discography to date comprises *African American Voices* and *African American Voices II*, made with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, showcasing music by Margaret Bonds, William Dawson, William Grant Still, Coleridge Taylor Perkinson, Florence Price, and George Walker. Both albums have met with the highest critical acclaim, including a 5-star review from *Diapason* magazine.

Gray's appointment as associate artist of the RSNO marked an unprecedented but organic development following his highly successful tenure as the orchestra's assistant conductor (2021–23). Previous positions in his formative years as a conductor included tenures with the Charleston Symphony Orchestra (associate conductor, 2018–23), Chicago Sinfonietta (conducting fellow and assistant conductor, 2016–18), and Valdosta Symphony Orchestra (assistant conductor, 2014–16).

Gray is based in Baltimore, MD.

MELISSA WHITE *violin*



Dario Acosta

American violinist Melissa White enchants audiences with her "warmly expressive and lyrical...glittering" playing (*Chicago Classical Review*). Her rapid rise as a soloist has captured the attention of orchestras and audiences worldwide, many of whom already know her

for her successes as a founding member of the Grammy-winning Harlem Quartet.

In the 2026–27 season, White will be featured with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Lima Symphony, South Florida Symphony, Tuscaloosa Symphony, and Finland's Kuopio Symphony Orchestra. Last season, she made her debut with the Seattle Symphony, gave the world premiere of Sophia Jani's Violin Concerto with the Dallas Symphony, and performed with Northwest Sinfonietta and the Columbus, Johnson City, and Mobile Symphony Orchestras. Recent solo recital debuts include Carnegie Hall, Boston Conservatory, Chamber Music Detroit, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Phillips Collection, and Purdue Convocations. She also regularly appears with the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective, which tours the U.S. in October, and collaborates at leading festivals such as Festival Napa Valley, Sarasota, Spoleto, and Tippet Rise.

A first-prize laureate in the Sphinx Competition, White has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Pops, Louisville Orchestra, and the Atlanta, Baltimore, Colorado, Detroit, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras. Internationally, she has appeared as soloist with the Graz Philharmonic, Czech National Philharmonic, Filharmonia Dolnoslaska, Cape Town Philharmonic, and Colombian Youth Orchestra. Her film credits include the soundtrack to Jordan Peele's psychological thriller *Us*, and she has performed alongside pop artists including Pharrell, Bruno Mars, Alicia Keys, and Lauryn Hill.

White is a founding member of the Harlem Quartet, where she has performed in many of the top venues in the United States, U.K., Europe, Africa, and Japan since its 2006 founding. The Harlem Quartet's 2013 recording with Chick Corea and Gary Burton, "Mozart Goes Dancing" earned a Grammy Award, and they received one again in 2024 for "Passion for Bach and Coltrane," with Imani Winds, A.B. Spellman, and a jazz trio. In 2025, the Quartet earned its first Latin Grammy

nomination for "Havana meets Harlem" with Cuban pianist-composer Aldo López Gavilán.

White currently serves on the faculty at New York University and at the University of Buffalo. She is also the co-founder of Intermission, a groundbreaking program uniting yoga and music.

White is represented worldwide by Dinin Arts Management & Consulting. She is incredibly grateful to be playing a c1780 Ferdinando Gagliano violin, currently on loan from Strumentini.

THE ORCHESTRA NOW (TŌN)

Founded in 2015 by Bard College, TŌN is a graduate program that is training the next generation of music professionals, offering a master's degree or an advanced certificate. The members of the orchestra are graduates of the world's leading conservatories, and hail from countries across North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Many have gone on to have successful careers in orchestras around the world.

TŌN performs dozens of concerts a year at venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Fisher Center at Bard. In 2025, TŌN performed two concerts in Koblenz and Nuremberg, Germany. The orchestra has performed with numerous distinguished guest conductors and soloists, including Leonard Slatkin, Gil Shaham, Neeme Järvi, Stephanie Blythe, Fabio Luisi, Vadim Repin, Joseph Young, Peter Serkin, Naomi Woo, and JoAnn Falletta.

TŌN has released several albums on the Hyperion, Sorel Classics, and AVIE labels. Fall 2025 releases include *Premieres* with violinist Gil Shaham and *Transcription as Translation*. Recordings of TŌN's live concerts from the Fisher Center can be heard regularly on Classical WMHT-FM and WWFM The Classical Network, and the orchestra has appeared over 100 times on *Performance Today*, broadcast nationwide. More info at ton.bard.edu.

Violin I

Luca Sakon *Concertmaster*
Yuxuan Feng
Shan (Serena) Bai
Lap Yin Lee
Carlos Torres
Joas Erasmus
Sansa Wang
Mingyue Xia
Xiaomeng Ma

Violin II

Anna Wallace *Principal*
Iasmim Bonfim de Carvalho
Hanyu Feng
Anna Maria Cristina Popan
Jolin Yi-Lin Lin
Yuchen Zhao

Viola

Casey Lebkicker *Principal*
Benjamin Duke
Yuxuan Zhang
Flavia Pájaro-van de Stadt
Chia-Mei (Lily) Li
Enoch Ng
Carla Mendoza Trejo*

Cello

Shawn Thoma *Principal*
Christiaan Stefanus van Zyl
Alfred Western
Maria Paula Casas
Kate Hwang
Hannah Brown
Alex Engelhardt*
Nohyoon Kwak*
Stella Torkelson*

Bass

Jack Corcoran *Principal*
Moisés Chirinos
Zacherie Small
Luisa Torres
Shion Kim*
Nozomi Sugimoto*

Flute

Wen-Hsiu (Angela) Lai
Principal^{1,2}
Christian Midy *Principal*^{3,4}
Olivia Chaikin TŌN '26
*Piccolo*¹
Youbeen Cho*

Oboe

Nathalie Graciela Vela
Principal^{1,2}
Aaron Haettenschwiller
Principal^{3,4}
Shawn Hutchison TŌN '22
English Horn

Clarinet

Craig Swink *Principal*¹
Timothy Coffey *Principal*²,
Bass Clarinet^{1,4}
Eric Huang *Principal*^{3,4}

Bassoon

Peter Houdalis *Principal*^{1,2}
Shelby Capozzoli
Principal^{3,4},
*Contrabassoon*¹
Alejandro Morillo

Horn

Ashton Sady *Principal*^{1,2},
Assistant^{3,4}
Jack Sindall *Principal*^{3,4},
Assistant^{1,2}
Jaxson Padgett
Lee Cyphers
Felix Johnson

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Nathan Lyle *Principal*^{1,4}
Isaac Morton *Principal*²
Kassandra Miano *Principal*³

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Ethan Pound *Principal*
Yuki Mori
Charlie Hall *Bass Trombone*

Tuba

Joel Horton

Timpani

Pei Hsien (Ariel) Lu

Percussion

Philip Drembus
Jonathan Monk
Anthony Kirk APS '26

Harp

Zibin Zhou

Keyboard

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¹ Copland

² Price

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Ticket sales cover less than a quarter of the expenses for our concerts and educational initiatives. Your contributions enable TÖN to flourish, and with your sustained support, we can continue this unique educational program for classical musicians on the cusp of professional careers. Thank you for making an important investment in the future of classical music.

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Coleen Murphy Alexander '00 *Vice President for Administration*
Erin Cannan *Vice President for Civic Engagement*
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Peter Gadsby *Vice President for Institutional Research; Registrar*
Max Kenner '01 *Vice President; Executive Director, Bard Prison Initiative*
Debra Pemstein *Vice President for Development and Alumni/ae*

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Stephen Tremaine '07 *Vice President of Network Education; Chief of Staff*
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Dumaine Williams '03 *Vice President for Student Affairs; Dean of Early Colleges*

FISHER CENTER

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Felicitas S. Thorne *Emerita*
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Bard Music Festival Board of Directors

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Tomas Wise

Artistic Director and Chief Executive

Gideon Lester

Executive Producer and Chief Operating Officer

Aaron Mattocks

Administration

Thomas Flynn *Director of Finance and Administration*
Daia Bromberg *Finance and Administration Associate*
Paul Laibach *Manager, Technical Services*
Sharonica Littlejohn *Personnel and Special Projects Manager*
Jazmine Williams *Executive Coordinator and Advisory Board Liaison*

Producing

Jason Collins *Producer and Spiegeltent Curator*
Carter Edwards *Producer and Partnerships Manager*
Marco Nisticò *Opera Producer*
Madeline Reilly '22 *Assistant Producer and Event Manager*

Development

Debra Pemstein *Vice President for Development and Alumni/ae Affairs*
Alessandra Larson *Director of Institutional Advancement and Strategy*
Will Hogue *Operations Manager*
Jessica Wolf *Associate Director*
Linda Baldwin *Events Manager*
Emily Cavotti *Events, Assistant Manager*

General Management

Shannon Csorny *General Manager*
Jess Webber *Programs and Festival Operations Manager*

Environmental Services

Bill Cavanaugh *Environmental Specialist*
Drita Gjokaj *Environmental Specialist*

Facilities

Carmine Covelli *Facility Operations and Safety Manager*
Mitchell Holmes *Building Operations Coordinator*
Peter Servatius '18 *Building Operations Assistant and Fire Panel Watch Staff*
Hazaiah Tompkins '19 *Building Operations Coordinator*

Marketing and Audience Services

David Steffen *Director*
Taylor Bartenape *Box Office Supervisor*
Emily Berge-Thielmann *Box Office Supervisor*
Brittany Brouker *Associate Director of Marketing*
Grace Hill *House Manager*
Michael Hofmann VAP '15 *Associate Director of Audience Services*
Asa Kaplan '23 *Associate House Manager*
Hanna Okalava '27 *Assistant House Manager*
Garrett Sager HRA '23 *Marketing Manager*
Ryan Silverstein *Box Office Supervisor*
Paulina Swierczek VAP '19 *Box Office Manager*
Courtney Williams *Audience and Member Services Coordinator*

Communications

Jennifer Strodl *Director*
Amy Murray *Videographer*

Publications

Mary Smith *Director*
Jenna Obrizok *Production Manager*

Production

Jared Goldstein *Director*
Danelle Morrow *Administrator*
Jane Briguglio *Associate Manager*

Audio

Lex Morton *Audio Supervisor*

Costumes & Wardrobe

Moe Schell *Costume Supervisor*
Parker Nelson *Wardrobe Supervisor*
Sawyer Sa *Assistant Costume Shop Manager*

Lighting

Josh Foreman *Lighting Supervisor*
Walli Daniels *Electrician*
Jesse Dewane *Electrician*
Dale Gibbons *Electrician*

Orchestra

Stephen Dean *Orchestra Production Manager*
Marlan Barry *Head Classical Recording Engineer/Producer*
Emanuel Cohen *Orchestra Stagehand*
Dávid Kéringer IAP '24 TÔN '26 *Assistant Orchestra Stage Manager*
Michael Lynam *Piano Technician*

Liz Cohen *Orchestra Stage Manager*
Nora Rubenstone-Diaz '11 *Associate Orchestra Production Manager*
Matthew Strieder '21 *Assistant Orchestra Production Manager*
Ellie Wolfe-Merritt *Orchestra Stage Manager*

Scenic

Rick Reiser *Technical Director*
Zoe Barash *Carpenter*
Emma Cummings *Assistant Technical Director*
Sam Dickson '19 *Carpenter*
Maggie McFarland '21 *Props Coordinator*
Mike Murphy *Carpenter*
Hick Renadette *Head Rigger/Flyperson*

Video

Kat Fitzlangan *Video Supervisor*
John Gasper *Video Engineer*
May Pocsy '22 *Video Engineer*

Theater & Performance and Dance Programs

Jennifer Lown *Program Administrator*
Sabrina Sa *Artistic and Administrative Assistant*

BARD MUSIC FESTIVAL

Executive Director

Irene Zedlacher

Artistic Director

Christopher H. Gibbs

Associate Director

Raissa St. Pierre '87

Scholar in Residence 2027

Anna Harwell Celenza

Program Committee 2027

Byron Adams
Anna Harwell Celenza
Christopher H. Gibbs
Richard Wilson
Irene Zedlacher

Director of Choruses

James Bagwell

Vocal Casting

Joshua Winograde

INDIANA JONES

and the
**RAIDERS
OF THE LOST ARK.**



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FISHER CENTER AT BARD

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FULL ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY **JAMES BAGWELL**

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Bard

