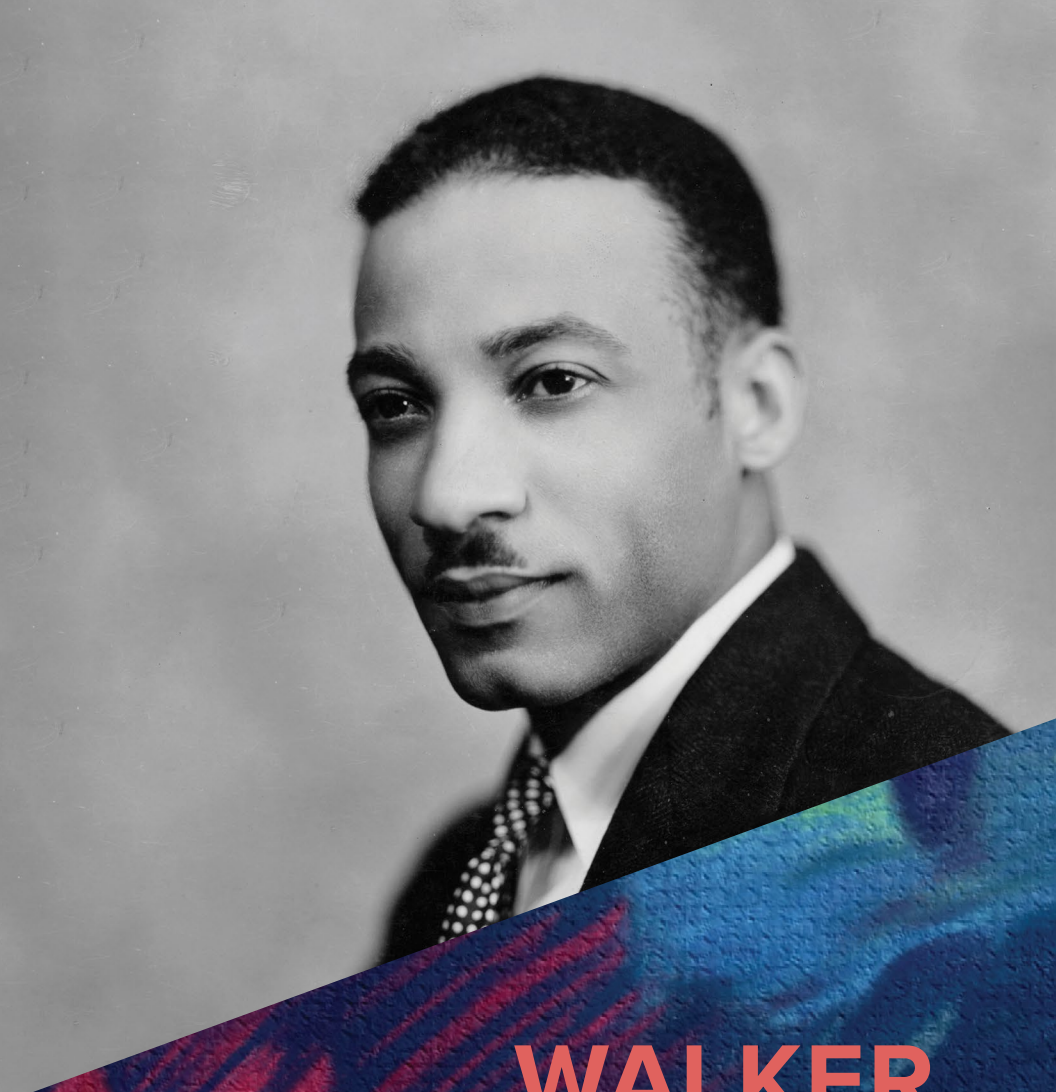
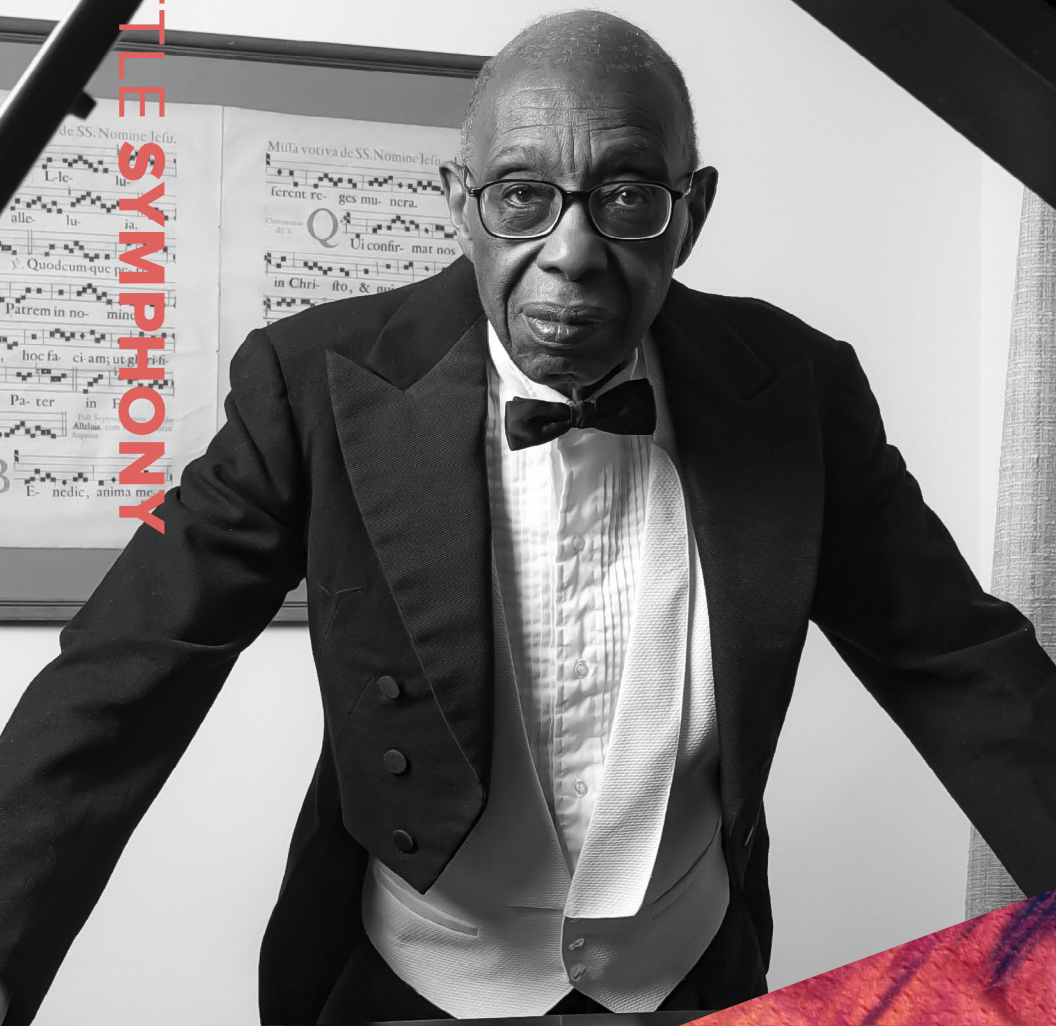


SEATTLE SYMPHONY



WALKER

LYRIC FOR STRINGS
FOLKSONGS FOR ORCHESTRA
LILACS FOR VOICE & ORCHESTRA

DAWSON

NEGRO FOLK SYMPHONY

GEORGE WALKER

1	<i>Lyric for Strings</i>	5:50
	<i>Folksongs for Orchestra</i>	
2	<i>Going to lay down my sword and shield</i>	3:39
3	<i>And they crucified my Lord</i>	1:32
4	<i>My Lord, what a morning</i>	3:10
5	<i>O, Peter, go ring dem bells</i>	2:16
	<i>Lilacs for Voice & Orchestra</i>	
6	I	3:26
7	II	2:14
8	III	2:48
9	IV	3:31

WILLIAM L. DAWSON

	<i>Negro Folk Symphony</i>	
10	<i>The Bond of Africa: Adagio—Allegro con brio</i>	11:42
11	<i>Hope in the Night: Andante— Allegretto alla scherzando</i>	11:36
12	<i>O Le' Me Shine, Shine Like a Morning Star: Allegro con brio</i>	7:37
	TOTAL TIME	59:21

SEATTLESYMPHONY.ORG

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SEATTLE SYMPHONY

The Seattle Symphony unleashes the power of music, brings people together and lifts the human spirit. Recognized as one of the “most vital American orchestras” (NPR), the Seattle Symphony is internationally acclaimed for its inventive programming, community-minded initiatives and superb recordings on the Seattle Symphony Media label. With a strong commitment to new music and a legacy of over 150 recordings, the orchestra has garnered five Grammy Awards, 27 Grammy nominations, two Emmy Awards and was named *Gramophone*’s 2018 Orchestra of the Year. The Symphony performs in Benaroya Hall in the heart of downtown Seattle from September through July, reaching over 750,000 people annually through live performances and radio broadcasts; through the Seattle Symphony+ streaming service, the orchestra’s concerts also reach audiences at home and around the world.

SEATTLE SYMPHONY

2021/2022 SEASON

Ludovic Morlot *Judith Fong Conductor Emeritus*
Joseph Crnko *Associate Conductor for Choral Activities*
Lee Mills *Douglas F. King Associate Conductor*
Gerard Schwarz *Rebecca & Jack Benaroya Conductor Laureate*

FIRST VIOLIN

Noah Geller
David & Amy Fulton
Concertmaster
Eduardo Rios
Clowes Family Associate
Concertmaster †
Jennifer Bai
Mariel Bailey
Cecilia Poellein Buss
Timothy Garland
Leonid Keylin
Andy Liang
Mae Lin
Mikhail Shmidt
John Weller
Jeannie Wells Yablonsky
Arthur Zadinsky

SECOND VIOLIN

Elisa Barston
Principal
Open Position
John & Carmen Delo
Associate Principal
Second Violin
Kathleen Boyer
Assistant Principal

Gennady Filimonov
Evan Anderson
Natasha Bazhanov
Brittany Breeden
Stephen Bryant
Linda Cole
Xiao-po Fei
Artur Girsky
Andrew Yeung

VIOLA

Susan Gulkis Assadi
PONCHO Principal Viola
Arie Schächter
Associate Principal
Mara Gearman
Assistant Principal
Timothy Hale
Olivia Chew
Wes Dyring
Sayaka Kokubo
Daniel Stone
Rachel Swerdlow

CELLO

Efe Baltacigil
Marks Family Foundation
Principal Cello

Meeka Quan DiLorenzo
Associate Principal
Nathan Chan
Assistant Principal
Eric Han
Bruce Bailey
Roberta Hansen Downey
Walter Gray
Vivian Gu
David Sabee

BASS

Jordan Anderson
Mr. & Mrs. Harold H. Heath
Principal String Bass
Joseph Kaufman
Associate Principal
Jonathan Burnstein
Jennifer Godfrey
Travis Gore
Will Langlie-Miletich

FLUTE

Demarre McGill
Principal
Supported by
David and Shelley Hovind

Jeffrey Barker
Associate Principal
Judy Washburn Kriewall *
Zartouhi Dombourian-Eby

PICCOLO

Zartouhi Dombourian-Eby
Robert & Clodagh Ash
Piccolo

OBOE

Mary Lynch VanderKolk
Principal
Supported by
anonymous donors
Ben Hausmann
Associate Principal
Chengwen Winnie Lai
Stefan Farkas

ENGLISH HORN

Stefan Farkas

CLARINET

Benjamin Lulich
Mr. & Mrs. Paul R. Smith
Principal Clarinet

Emil Khudyev
Associate Principal
Laura DeLuca
Dr. Robert Wallace Clarinet
Eric Jacobs

E-FLAT CLARINET

Laura DeLuca

BASS CLARINET

Eric Jacobs

BASSOON

Seth Krinsky
Principal
Luke Fieweger
Associate Principal
Paul Rafanelli

HORN

Jeffrey Fair
Charles Simonyi
Principal Horn
Mark Robbins
Stephen Whyte Associate
Principal Horn
Jonathan Karschney
Assistant Principal
Jenna Breen
John Turman
Danielle Kuhlmann

TRUMPET

David Gordon
Boeing Company
Principal Trumpet
Alexander White
Associate Principal
Christopher Stingle
Michael Myers

TROMBONE

Ko-ichiro Yamamoto
Principal
David Lawrence Ritt

TUBA

John DiCesare
Principal

TIMPANI

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Matthew Decker
Assistant Principal

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Michael A. Werner
Principal
Matthew Decker

HARP

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Principal

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Reena Esmail

HONORARY MEMBER

Cyril M. Harris †

◊ Resident

† In Memoriam

‡ Acting

* On Leave for
2021/2022 Season

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING MUSICIANS WHO ALSO PERFORMED ON THIS RECORDING:

Blayne Barnes, violin
Jason Bell, violin
Hui Cao, violin
Kelly Farris, violin
James Garlick, violin
Adrianna Hulscher, violin
Caitlin Kelley, violin
Heewon Park, violin
Brendan Shea, violin
Allison Farkas, viola
Kayleigh Miller, viola
Camille Ripple, viola
Charles Jacot, cello
Sara Rommel, cello
Sam Casseday, bass
Masaru Podgorny, bass
Robin Peery, flute
Selina Gresó, oboe
Carson Keeble, trombone
Graeme Mutchler, trombone
Nick Schwartz, trombone
Gunnar Folsom, percussion
Blaine Inafuku, percussion
Erica Montgomery, percussion
Rob Tucker, percussion
Mari Yoshinaga, percussion
Joseph Adam, keyboard
Christina Siemens, keyboard



ASHER FISCH CONDUCTS THE SEATTLE SYMPHONY AT BENAROYA HALL IN A PROGRAM FEATURING WORKS BY COMPOSER **GEORGE WALKER**.

RODERICK COX CONDUCTOR

Winner of the 2018 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award by the U.S Solti Foundation, Berlin-based American conductor Roderick Cox has been praised as a conductor who is “paving the way” (*NBC News*) and recognised as a “trailblazer ... a conductor who will be amongst the vanguard” (*Minnesota Star Tribune*).

Recent highlights include his debuts with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, BBC Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, Cleveland Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra; as well as returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Aspen Music Festival Chamber Orchestra. In the theatre, Cox has made important debuts at the Houston Grand Opera and San Francisco Opera as well as recording Jeanine Tesori’s *Blue* with the Washington National Opera.

With a passion for education, diversity and inclusion in the arts, Cox started the Roderick Cox Music Initiative (RCMI) in 2018 — a project that provides scholarships for young musicians of color from underrepresented communities, allowing them to pay for instruments, music lessons and summer camps. Cox and his new initiative are featured in a 2022 documentary called *Conducting Life*.

ASHER FISCH CONDUCTOR

A renowned conductor in both the operatic and symphonic worlds, Asher Fisch is especially celebrated for his interpretative command of the core German and Italian repertoire of the Romantic and post-Romantic era. Since 2014, Fisch has been the Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO). Fisch’s recent recordings include tenor Stuart Skelton’s first solo album, recorded with WASO and released on ABC Classics in 2018, and a recording of Ravel’s *L’heure espagnole* with the Munich Radio Orchestra. His recording of Wagner’s *Ring Cycle* with the Seattle Opera was released on the Avie label in 2014. His first *Ring Cycle* recording, with the State Opera of South Australia, won 10 Helpmann Awards, including best opera and best music direction.

NICOLE CABELL SOPRANO

Universally acclaimed for her velvety timbre and finely nuanced interpretations, American soprano Nicole Cabell continues to demonstrate her incredible versatility in repertoire ranging from Baroque to contemporary on the world’s greatest opera and concert stages as well as on disc. Cabell sang her first staged Bess in James Robinson’s acclaimed 2018 production of *Porgy and Bess* for English National Opera, conducted by John Wilson. At home in the United States, she has stepped onto the Opera stage as Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*) and sung Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) at Michigan Opera Theatre under Christopher Allen.



RODERICK COX CONDUCTS THE SEATTLE SYMPHONY AT BENAROYA HALL
IN A PROGRAM FEATURING **WILLIAM DAWSON'S NEGRO FOLK SYMPHONY.**

WALKER & DAWSON

The music of **George Walker** and **William Levi Dawson** is a microcosm of Black classical composers' stylistic diversity. Each draw upon African American music idioms for different settings, characters and functions. And yet, the works connect through the importance of programmatic and emotive narratives within the Black classical practice. Whether quoting or arranging spirituals, or using blues notes or serialism, the music of both Walker and Dawson tells a story, be it enormous internal journeys or a massive historical epic.

George Walker was born and raised in Washington, D.C., one of many American cities with a self-sustaining, diverse and culturally impactful Black community. His mother got him started on piano at the age of five; his musical interests eventually blossomed out to composition. After graduating from Oberlin College at the age of 18, he studied composition with Samuel Barber and piano with Rudolf Serkin at the Curtis Institute of Music. He earned a doctorate from Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester in 1956 and in the late 1950s, studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris.

Walker straddles the line between American neo-romantic and modernist traditions. You can hear it in the lush textures, brittle timbres, non-linear direction, African American folk tonalities, jazz harmonies and tonal dissonance. Some of these features are put to stunning use in his ***Lyric for Strings*** (1946). A reworking of the second

movement of his first string quartet, *Lyric* is an elegy to Walker's grandmother, Malvina King, a woman who was born enslaved, took her freedom, and died free. Walker considered her one of the most important figures in his life.

Lyric for Strings opens solemnly. Each section is layered upon the one that preceded it, a textural staple of Walker's later works. The melody slowly unspools, set in a call-and-response texture that extends across and between each part (or section for the orchestral setting). The violins are shrill, the cellos and bass bellow, and the violas do both, taking full advantage of their ability to make rich and aching timbres. *Lyric for Strings* is a meditation on what is lost, what is shared, what is remembered and what is carried on; a piece that is gorgeous, tragic and hopeful all at once.

Walker would continue to explore the emotive power of the bittersweet in his music. Another example is his ***Folksongs for Orchestra*** (1990). Each of the four movements are built upon a Negro spiritual: *Going to lay down my sword and shield; And they crucified my Lord; My Lord, what a morning; and O, Peter, go ring dem bells*.

Going to lay down my sword and shield opens meditatively, the textures lush and clear. The spiritual theme is first heard clearly in the oboe, a prickly and upbeat polyphonic section that contrasts with the return to the meditative and solemn opening. *And they crucified my Lord* is shrill, painful; a solo trumpet blasting over brittle strings, laying bare the spiritual's emotional roots. *My Lord, what a morning* is a balm for the angst that preceded it. Again, woodwinds and brass are centralized. Through brass chorale and

call-and-response textures, Walker draws out the spiritual's quotation to the point that it sounds like a brand-new theme. *O, Peter, go ring dem bells* opens with piano and strings, growing to glittering timbres and bittersweet harmonies. Walker transforms these staples of African American sacred music by placing them within an inventive and electrifying new context, building upon a 100-plus-year-old tradition of Negro spiritual arrangements.

Walker's ***Lilacs for Voice & Orchestra*** (1996) is a return to the themes of *Lyric for Strings*, an elegy of public and personal grief. Commissioned and premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, *Lilacs for Voice & Orchestra* is set to the Walt Whitman poem, "When *Lilacs* Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (1865), itself an elegy to President Abraham Lincoln. Walker uses the first, second, third and 13th stanzas for the first, second, third and fourth movements, respectively, pulling out some of Whitman's most evocative imagery.

In the first movement, brass, woodwinds and strings put the beauty and the pain front and center; but it is not overt, leaving room for the impassioned entrance of the vocalist ("When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd"). Sudden fortissimos, vocal melisma and high registers on the line "I mourn'd" follow the swift changes in emotion and perspective that come with loss. The second movement cannot keep the emotional darkness at bay. Walker shows this through descending motives, low brass figures and abrupt climbs to high registers.

The orchestra creeps along in the third movement, falling back as the vocalist's line leads the direction and development. Short motives, eerie tonalities and sudden dynamic changes create the impression of tumultuous stasis; this is not an emotional journey with a clear start and finish. The fourth movement opens with a pokey, almost cheerful theme. But its character is skewed, with a layer of uncertainty at its foundation. This theme reappears in subtle fragments, a directional contrast with the vocal line, which is more forward moving and determined. However, like mourning, sometimes you fall back to where you started. The first movement's main theme returns, between lines of the stanza that again highlight painful irony of beauty existing at a time when something heartbreaking has occurred:

"You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me."

An Alabama son, William Dawson studied at the Tuskegee Institute, graduating from the high school division in 1921. Completing his B.A. in Composition in 1925 and his master's in 1927, Dawson returned to his alma mater to serve as music director of the Tuskegee Institute Choir. Through this position, Dawson would become a major figure in the world of choral music. His settings of Negro spirituals are so distinct and technically stunning that some scholars have argued they should be considered original compositions; and his pedagogical approach made the Tuskegee Institute Choir a global sensation and a major interpreter of choral repertoire in the 20th century.

But a few years into his tenure at Tuskegee, another creative project drew his attention: his one and only symphony. Dawson's *Negro Folk Symphony* was premiered by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1934. In the words of composer-critic Shirley Graham (later Dubois), Dawson and his contemporaries, Florence B. Price and William Grant Still, constituted a Black symphonist trinity. Dawson illustrated that Romantic aesthetics — programmatic narrative, folk expressions of national identity and the symphony itself — were still ripe for personal expression and modern innovation. Through three movements, Dawson charts the history of African Americans, using the symphony's expressive power and large scope to make a distinctly African American articulate of history, place and culture. "I've not tried to imitate Beethoven or Brahms, Franck, or Ravel," he shared in an interview, "but to be just myself, a Negro. To me, the finest compliment that could be paid my symphony when it has its premiere is that it unmistakably is not the work of a white man. I want the audience to say: 'Only a Negro could have written that.'"

One of the major ways Dawson achieves this is by centering African American idioms through his approach to thematic reference, as well as his use of rhythm and polyphony as form and harmonic progression. The first movement, *The Bond of Africa: Adagio—Allegro con brio*, is based on the Negro spiritual (or as Dawson referred to them, Negro folk songs), "Oh, My Little Soul Gwine Shine Like a Star." Fragmented and polyphonic textures cradle and push the main theme through different orchestral sections and melodic development. The second movement, *Hope in the Night: Andante—Allegretto*

(alla scherzando), evokes the tragic terror of enslavement and hope of freedom through lyrical, haunting passages. The third and last movement, *O Le' Me Shine, Shine Like a Morning Star: Allegro con brio*, is built upon the Negro spirituals "O Lemme Shine" and "Hallelujah, Lord, I Been Down into the Sea." Rhythm and polyphony once again drive the finale's melodic development; the embrace of instruments' distinctive timbres create another layer of tension and resolution with the harmony. Dawson charts the journey from Africa to America, a powerful sonic expression of Black American history and modernity as well as the continued emotional power of the symphonic form.

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TEXTS

LILACS FOR VOICE & ORCHESTRA

BASED ON THE POEM BY WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)

“WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM’D”

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom’d,
And the great star early droop’d in the western sky in the night,
I mourn’d, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear’d—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash’d palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-colour’d blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.
O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

Recorded in the S. Mark Taper Foundation Auditorium, Benaroya Hall, Seattle, Washington.

George Walker's *Lyric for Strings* and *Folksongs for Orchestra* were recorded live in concert February 10, 12 & 13, 2022 as part of the 2021/2022 Delta Air Lines Masterworks Series.

George Walker's *Lilacs* for Voice & Orchestra was recorded February 11, 2022.

William Dawson's *Negro Folk Symphony* was recorded live in concert April 21, 23 & 24, 2022 as part of the 2021/2022 Delta Air Lines Masterworks Series.

Cover Photos: George Walker pictured at left (courtesy of Frank Schramm), William Dawson pictured at right (courtesy of New York Public Library).

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