

Can You Hear God Crying?

A Spiritatorio by
Hannibal Lokumbe

Janice Chandler-Eteme *soprano*

Rodrick Dixon *tenor*

Homayun Sakhi *Afghan rubâb*

Paula Holloway *vocalist*

Rev. Dr. Alyn E. Waller *readings*

The Celebration Choir

J. Donald Dumpson *choir master*

The Music Liberation Orchestra

The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

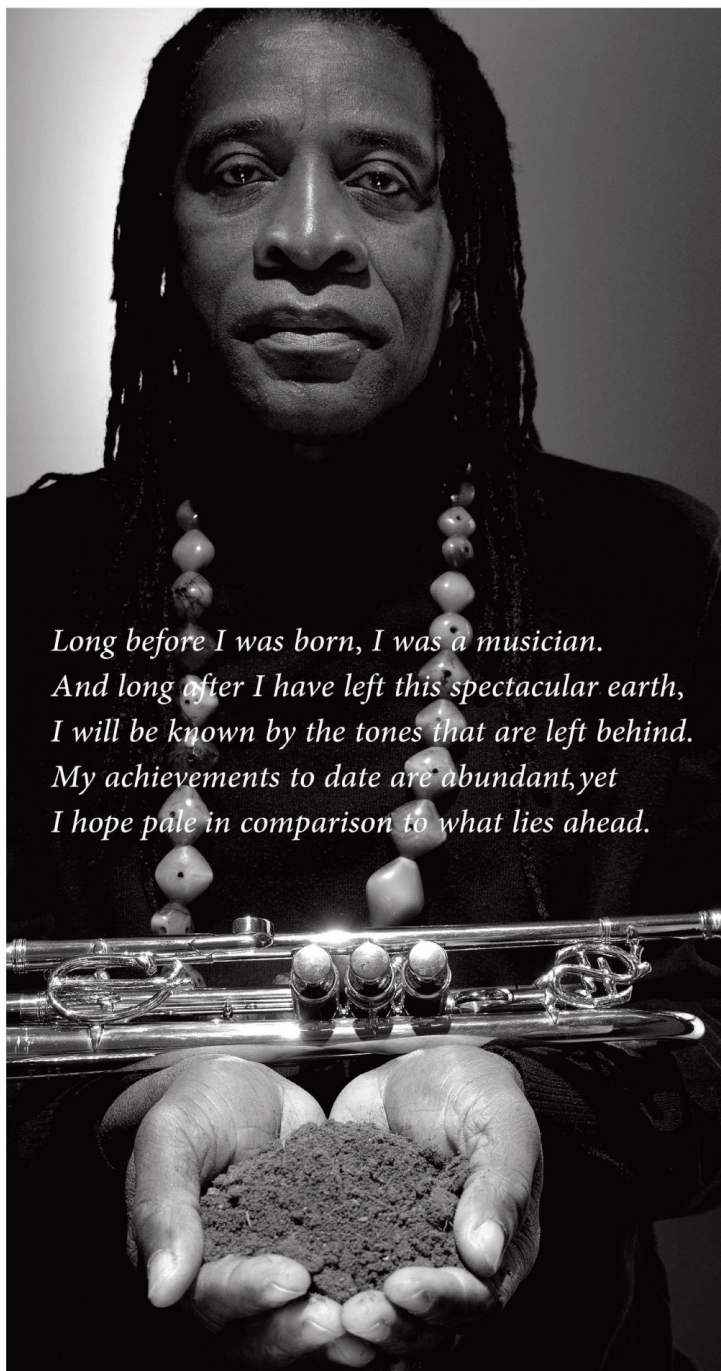
Dirk Brossé *conductor*

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

© & © 2014 Naxos Rights US, Inc

9.70220





*Long before I was born, I was a musician.
And long after I have left this spectacular earth,
I will be known by the tones that are left behind.
My achievements to date are abundant, yet
I hope pale in comparison to what lies ahead.*

Photo of Hannibal Lokumbe by Mark Winslett

Can You Hear God Crying?

A Spiritatorio*

Music and Sung Text by Hannibal Lokumbe

Janice Chandler-Eteme *soprano*

Rodrick Dixon *tenor*

Homayun Sakhi *Afghan rubâb*

Paula Holloway *vocalist*

Rev. Dr. Alyn E. Waller *readings*

Dirk Brossé *conductor*

J. Donald Dumpson *choir master*

The Celebration Choir

Enon Tabernacle Mass Choir and Men's Choir

The Germantown Concert Chorus • The Clayton White Singers

The Arch Street Presbyterian Church Choir • Sounds of Joy Music Ministry

The Music Liberation Orchestra

Hannibal Lokumbe *trumpet* • **Anthony Wonsey** *piano* • **Nimrod Speaks** *bass*

Byron C. Landham *drums* • **Mogauwane Mahloele** *percussion*

The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia;

Meichen Liao Barnes *violin* • **Doris Hall-Gulati** *clarinet*

Karen Schubert, Lyndsie Wilson *French horn*

Brian Kuszyk, Steven Heitzer *trumpet*

Timothy Soberick, Michael Purdy *tenor trombone*

Barry McCommon *bass trombone* • **Paul Erion** *tuba*

Barry Dove *percussion*

*The composer defines 'Spiritatorio' as a work using different genres of music, words and images to evoke a profound spiritual and intellectual response.

Hannibal Lokumbe (b. 1948)

The journey of composer Hannibal Lokumbe, trumpeter of the Music Liberation Orchestra, has taken him from the cotton fields of Elgin, Texas, where he was first inspired by the spirituals and hymns of his grandparents, to the stages of Carnegie Hall and much of the world. He spent twenty five years in New York City playing trumpet and recording with some of his jazz heroes (including Gil Evans, Pharaoh Sanders, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, and McCoy Tyner) and is the recipient of numerous awards including The USA Artists (Cummings Fellow), The Joyce, Bessie's, NEA, and Lifetime Achievement Award from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Lokumbe is a leader in expressing the African-American experience through orchestral and choral music, with a particular focus on civil rights leaders. In 1998, the New Jersey Symphony commissioned and premiered *God, Mississippi and a Man Called Evers* about the slain civil rights activist Medgar Evers. Other works include *Soul Brother*, inspired by the life of Malcolm X, and *A Great and Shining Light*, about former Atlanta mayor and United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young.

He has composed works for Carnegie Hall, The Kronos String Quartet, as well as the Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit and Houston Symphonies. His groundbreaking *African Portraits* was performed and recorded by the Chicago Symphony under the direction of Daniel Barenboim and has been performed numerous times since its November 11, 1990 Carnegie Hall debut. In addition *Dear Mrs. Parks*, which pays homage to Rosa Parks in the form of imaginary letters to the civil rights heroine, was commissioned, performed and recorded by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in March 2009 and released by Naxos [8.559668]. He recently played the role of Luke in a major production of James Baldwin's play *The Amen Corner* at The Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, MN.

Can You Hear God Crying received its world premiere at the Kimmel Center's Verizon Hall, Philadelphia on Friday, September 21, 2012. Hannibal Lokumbe shares his great-grandfather Silas Burgess' journey aboard a slave ship two centuries ago on his way to the auction blocks of

Potters Mart in Charlestown, South Carolina, and relays the cycles of life and spiritual emancipation he experienced thereafter. The music fuses jazz, gospel and chamber music together with West African prayers and songs.

Can You Hear God Crying? is performed in a set of 10 veils, symbolic of Silas' journey and evolving understanding. The work begins with *Who (Veil 1)* in which Kunanamui (the name for God in Kpelle) sings a prayer of love and affirmation to The Jonah People accompanied by the Afghan *rabab* instrument. The work continues with *The Prayer of Silas (Veil 2)* referring to his life in Africa. *I Have Come for You (Veil 3)* is a choral performance of God's promise to Silas as he ran away from the South Carolinian rice plantation. In *Incarnate (Veil 4)* we learn that in spite of the hardships Silas endured, he chose the path of peace and spiritual restoration. As a result The Creator revealed many things to him. One was the sight of his mother and father dancing around a campfire during the migration of the Kpelle people from the Sahara to present day Liberia. At the very heart of the work is *The Door of No Return (Veil 5)* which represents healing and celebration of the courage and peace found in facing the past; an acknowledgement of the strength and will needed to survive; and the trials and triumphs of life today. *The Jonah People (Veil 6)* is the name God whispered to me, as being the name of all Africans and their descendants who were forced aboard ships and taken to all parts of the world as slaves. *Hymn For The Living (Veil 7)* is written in honor of The Jonah People who survived their forced migration by ship. *Can You Hear God Crying? (Veil 8)* speaks to the current struggles of The Jonah People. *I Will Go To The Lord (Veil 9)* is my expression of supreme exaltation for The Living God – my refuge, my sanctuary, my ultimate desire, my song of songs. *One/Tono (Veil 10)* represents the commonality of creation. In this Veil the spirit of Silas is welcomed home by The Creator, the perfect state of One/Tono. Because of his love affair with The Creator, he left cattle, land, a church called Zion Hill, and most notably, a legacy of love.

Adapted from notes by Hannibal Lokumbe

Hannibal Lokumbe Can You Hear God Crying?



Photo of Zion Hill Church by Randy Kerr

- 1 **Veil One.** Who 19:33
- 2 **Veil Two.** Prayer of Silas 3:08
- 3 **Veil Three.** I Have Come for You 5:18
- 4 **Veil Four.** Incarnate 5:50
- 5 **Veil Five.** The Door of No Return 3:39
- 6 **Veil Six.** The Jonah People 4:16
- 7 **Veil Seven.** Hymn for The Living 2:06
- 8 **Veil Eight.** Can You Hear 11:32
- 9 **Veil Nine.** I Will Go To The Lord 7:56
- 10 **Veil Ten.** One/Tono 4:13

Total Time 67:34

My mother Lillian Earl Peterson gave me to the world, and gave the world to me.

I am deeply indebted to my aunt Gladys Peterson Green for sharing details of this story that she learned from her mother Susie Burgess Peterson, one of Silas Burgess' twenty-two children.

Composing it took me to a tent alone in the woods, to circles of pain and hope in prisons in Texas and Philadelphia, to schools with brilliant children.

I hope that the music that has come from my journey can help you on yours to become The Divine Soul that you are.

At the core of this composition is the monumental love affair between my great-grandfather Silas Burgess and Kunanamui, as he would have called God in his native Kpelle language. The love affair begins the moment he is conceived in the tent of his father and mother as they migrate from the southern Saharan city of Timbuktu to the coast of present-day Liberia.

Their love continues until he dies in the bed he made, in the house he built from cedar that grew on the land he purchased in Hills Prairie, Texas in 1898.

Because love never dies, the affair continues through time—and in this music.

The attributes of The Creator are infinite.

God is truth, and the tears of God in this composition are not water but light. They illuminate our darkness.

The human darkness that chained my great-grandfather and his mother in the wooden dungeon of a slave ship two centuries ago continues to obscure our vision, making the subject of this composition as relevant today as it would have been the day he and his mother were forced onto the auction blocks of Charleston, South Carolina.

Instead of movements, I now compose music in veils. I feel veils better indicate movement from one level of consciousness – or realization – to the next. Veils are not something you leave behind as you move to the next part, but something permanent that you carry with you through time.

1 Veil One

Who

For Carole Haas Gravagno

In Veil One, Kunanamui sings to humanity, a prayer of love and affirmation. This prayer is introduced by the personal, even pastoral sound of the rabab, a stringed instrument whose roots date back four thousand years to India and is foundational to North African music.

Kunanamui:

My mothers of the world,
my fathers of the world.

Choir:

Oh yes, Lord, come to us.

Kunanamui:

My brothers, my sisters of the world,
and to all of my children of the world.

Choir:

Teach us, Lord, teach us, Holy Spirit.

Kunanamui:

Can't you see just how much I love you?

Choir:

Merciful God, merciful Lord,
divine is your light, truth is your name.

Kunanamui:

Can't you see it in my tears?

What more can I give to you to turn you away
from the hate which you now live?

Were I to change the colors and the scent of the
flowers,

would you then smell the fragrance of love that I
give to you?

Shall I breathe more life into the ground and the sky,
to entice you, to nudge you towards the peace of
my arms?

The birds try to sing, the best they can,
the songs that I write for you, with each touch
of my hand to the sky, with each sigh of my heart.

The oceans, the land, the sky,
they are all there for you to see,
to live, to share, to become.

Then who will seek the way,
and who will live the way,

and who will show the way,
and who will become the way
that leads to the soul of me?

Choir:

Oh ...

Who, who will ...

Who will seek, who will live,
who will show, who will become?

This I give to you, my dear child,
a gift of perfect love to behold,
to guide your footsteps back home to me.

I want you to be whole in all things,
so keep my love for you deep inside,

a scented flower of peace and joy,
to lift you from the scent of your pain,
to see you live with grace once again.

Who, who, who, who ...

Sopranos:

Who-o-o ...

Altos and Tenors:

Who has the courage, who has the strength,
who has the will to seek the way?

Who has the courage, who has the strength,
who has the faith to live the way?

Who has the courage, who has the strength,
who has the mind to show the way?

Who has the mercy, who has the great heart,
who has the love to become ...

Kunanamui:

Who will seek the way,
and who will live the way,
who will show the way,
and who of you will become the way?

2 Veil Two

The Prayer of Silas

For Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Monroe and New Zion Hill COGIC

Silas prays two prayers on the last day of his life: one standing beneath the giant oak tree – still standing – on the Upton, Texas farm of his daughter Susie, and the other in his bed. Vivid accounts of both are legendary in our family. They refer to his early childhood in Africa, and the names he heard spoken there. Both make clear that the Portuguese did not bring God to him, or to his people. They were met by God whose name they did not know.

Silas:

O merciful God, only you could possibly know how
much I love you.

Only you could know and understand the truth of
these words that have lived for so long inside of me.

Words that struggle to say what you already know.
I thank you for never leaving me. I thank you for
holding my life in your hands even when I didn't
know where it was. I've made my peace with the
glorious gift of life you have given me. No fear or
hatred do I hold. With all things of the world I am
now at peace. The joy and the pain of it, the lies
and the truth of it, the killing and the healing of it.

Now in my final hour I've come to understand that I
could never become what I have prayed to become,
for it is the fullness of you that I have always wished
to become. And through the door which leads to

that fullness, my flesh could never pass. Now with
gladness I greet the shadows and the light that
have gathered around me for I know that it means I
will soon be with you and come to know you only as
the spirit could know and be with you.

Great is the name of the Lord. Holy and Mercy is
the name of the Lord.

I felt that mercy when the fangs of the viper missed
my tiny feet while playing in grandma Yaitoma's
mango grove. I feel it as I felt it when my father
would weave stories into the fibers of my heart as
we sat fishing in his boat upon the placid lake of
Piso, waiting for the first light of day.

I felt it when the killers came and burned our
villages to ashes.

I felt it when through the door of evil they took my
mother, my cousins, my uncles and aunts. I felt it
when into the hole of their wooden ship my eight-
year-old body was cast.

Jonah I was, Lord, in the belly of the beast. In its
belly I knew it was you who grabbed my hand when
the weight of the chains pulled my mother's hand
from mine, when the song of the shackles reached
for my sanity.

I knew it was you who whispered new life into me
when they sold us like animals upon the auction
blocks of Babylon.

You were always there, my Lord, and now many
are my seed and in their blood lives your name.

God of my mother, God of my father and God of all
that comes and goes, as I stand at the eternal door
it is my deeds that I offer as my greatest tribute, as
my greatest treasure. Were it possible, I would
make a necklace of them and place them around
your neck.

And now with the last of me, which was once the
first of me, I ask for your mercy upon this world and
upon my soul.

3 Veil Three

I Have Come for You

For Mr. James A. Wilson, Teacher/Father

In Veil Three God keeps the promise made to Silas when he was escaping the rice plantation in South Carolina.

The choir represents his voice as he lay dying in his bed. I wanted the music in this veil to float as a descending leaf. It is a chorale of praise to The Creator.

I've also featured the clarinet which to me is as close an instrumental proximity to the human voice that I know. I often use it to make distinct spiritual

references as well. Like the drum, it is a musical brush of endless, deep, rich human tones.

Kunanamui:

Silas, faithful is your life.

To honor that faith,

I will allow you to live it once again.

I will place it before you as you have placed it before me.

Silas:

My Lord! Yes, Lord!

Father, I hear you.

Kunananamui:

Come, let us go and return

to the place which has become the last.

Then I will come for you,

as I promised I would come for you,

when in the swamps of the land called Carolina you were running for your freedom and your life, with the spirit of your mother holding back the terror of dogs, ropes and chains.

Silas:

I remember.

God, how I remember her face.

Choir: As spirits

Mercy is the Lord God.

Mercy is my God.

Sopranos, Altos and Tenors:

Mercy is the name of the Lord, the living God.

Healing is the voice of the Lord, the peace of life, endless life.

Basses:

I love the living God.

By your Grace I have life, endless life.

Kunanamui:

When I come for you, Silas,

I will come like a slow steady wind, coming for a leaf that has turned brown, red, yellow and gold.

Silas:

Come and get me, Lord,

I am waiting, watching, and praying, and now you are here.

Choir:

My Lord, oh, how I love you.

4 Veil Four

Incarnate

For the teachers of our children

Because of Silas's faith, Kunanamui allows his spirit to look upon the faces of his father who perished in

Africa while trying to save his family and village from the slave traders, and of his mother who ran away from the Carolina rice plantation after being repeatedly beaten and raped by the owner. She was never seen or heard of again.

Silas is astonished to see his mother and father dancing around a campfire on the Sahara Desert. The Kpelle people migrated from the Saharan region to present day Liberia.

In a dream the spirit of Silas's mother appeared to me splendidly dressed in African attire on January 17, 2012, to take my mother's soul away from this world. I am now convinced that the spirit of my Great Great Grandfather will one day come for mine.

Veil Four is meant to free humans of all things that would keep them from screaming, dancing, and rejoicing at the miracle of being alive.

Kunanamui:

There, Silas, in the tent of your mother and father your spirit became flesh upon the great place of sand called Sahara,

on their way from the walls of Timbuktu.

It was the time of the living and the dying.

Here then is the living of your people, trumpets, and drums, and songs of forever, in praise of me and the living yet to be born.

Silas:

O my Lord, to see my mother in all her splendor, to see her dancing with my father again beneath the star-lit night.

How can it be such beauty and joy, such sounds of life on this earth?

Choir: As the Kpelle people

Help us, show us, cleanse us, free us, teach us, keep us, love us, heal us.

Living light of ancient power,

you, the keeper of us one and all,

mystery of the come and go,

God of the ebb and flow,

help us, show us, cleanse us, free us,

teach us, keep us, love us, heal us.

For the seed that has yet to be,

for the blood that has yet to run,

for the elders who have yet to sigh,

for the living who have yet to die.

Sopranos, Second Altos, First Tenors, Basses:

We come, we go, we plant, we stay, we dance, we sing, we shout, we pray.

First Altos, Second Tenors:

We come because of you, in praise of you, dear Lord.

5 Veil Five

The Door of No Return

For Martin Payton

Can You Hear God Crying? was first revealed to me in flashes of light which emanated from the seal of a door each time a person was taken through it. In a now-decaying fortress located on Bunce Island off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia, lies the door through which my great grandfather Silas and millions of others were taken.

I composed the clarinet passage after my spirit took one of its many journeys through that door and saw tears of light emanating from the thresholds of the door. This light was an eternal scanning by the Creator, recording each and every soul made to pass through that door.

I used the one-note pulse in the third trombone and tuba to represent the pulsating of the light, and the quarter note pattern in the choir to represent each person moving through the door-way.

On the final chord in this veil, every note in the music scale is used. It is the embodiment of the Ying Yang principle.

Each of us has a door. To return through that door brings a peace that is worth whatever price we have to pay in order to reclaim that peace. This music comes from the honor I was given – and the healing – to step back, with my ancestors, through The Door of No Return.

Kunanamui allows the spirit of Silas to see his people moving through The Door of No Return on Bunce Island.

I am convinced that the state of Nirvana comes when we do not run from that which haunts us. It comes when we accept the lessons of our pain as we accept the lessons of our joy.

Silas:

My Lord, what is this terror

I see here before me?

Mother in tears, smoke everywhere,

grandma is crying.

My village is burning.

Look at my mother, look at my father,

lying in his own blood.

Togba.

Yonga.

Suah.

So much killing, so much dying.

I fear for the world.

So much hatred and pain, greed and evil.

Lord, I shiver.

Lord, I shiver.

Shiver.

Lord, I need you.

Lord, I love you.

Kunanamui:

Silas, listen with your soul.

I am God of all things,

all time, all worlds,

of all things that the flesh cannot see.

Look, you will see it,

the light in the doorway of no return, that saw each soul taken through it.

I am that light, Silas,

never to leave you, never to forsake you.

Now just look, and you will see.

Choir: As God's voice

I am the light that you saw in the doorway of pain.

The sacred tears of light,

that live deep in your soul,

when you passed

through the space of deep moans,

wrote your name with each tear

and kept it for all time

to heal you, to keep you,

to set you free of all doors.

6 Veil Six

The Jonah People

For Sonia Sanchez

One night in the dense dark forest of Rosanky, Texas, I watched The Milky Way journey across the heavens. My soul journeyed with it. It was then I asked God to reveal to me a name which truly describes those stolen from Africa and transported by boat to all parts of the world. Negroes, Colored, and Black seemed to fall short. And all Africans in America did not come in this manner so the name African American does not suffice.

“Like my son Jonah you are,” my Lord said to me. I sat up from the table and stood with my arms outstretched. “His beast was made from the anguish of his mind, whereas yours was made of both the mind and of wood. This is the commonality that is shared by those, and the descendants of those, who were cast into the belly of the beast made of wood, ropes, sails, and suffering. This you have in common, more than the hue of your skin or the tribes from which you were taken. And this you will have in common for as long as there is one of you who is descended from the belly of such a beast.”

In Veil Six, the orchestra drum represents the ship's violent crashing down into the water. Women and men in the choir moan separately to symbolize what they endured—and still endure. The violin solo

characterizes their spiritual strength and will to survive.

Choir: As The Jonah People chained below the decks of slave ships

Oh ...

Hm ...

We shall all be free, free.

7 Veil Seven

Hymn for the Living

For Lorene Cary

Hymn for the Living is written in honor of those who survived The Middle Passage.

The tonalities in this veil are constructed to be a spiritual and physical balm to restore their minds and souls.

They would need inhuman strength to help them past what lay ahead once they were taken from the slave ships to the auction blocks.

This veil was created to salute and inspire The People of Jonah who now find themselves faced with ever increasing social challenges.

The music begins faintly from a distance with a rain cymbal and approaches like a rainstorm coming to replenish the earth and all of the life upon it. The underlying drum solo reinforces the intrinsic spiritual bond between the drum and The People of Jonah –thunder, voices, heartbeat, language, life.

8 Veil Eight

Can You Hear?

For my Brothers and Sisters of The Music Liberation Orchestra

My Lord made it clear to me.

“You must go into the jails and prisons of this land and tell my children that I will *never* leave them. And that they will come to liberate the world from much of its suffering. Let them be the first to hear of the story of your great grandfather and his unflinching faith in me. Tell them how he rose above the oppression and the terror of those who served the beast and lived to preach in a church he built from the timber cut from his *own land*.”

The next day I went to the Bastrop County Jail to meet with Sheriff Pickering. On October 30th 2010, I formed the first chapter of The Music Liberation Orchestra, an organization of inmates founded upon four principles: to renounce violence, to acknowledge the presence of The Divine, to keep a journal for yourself and your children and last, to fall in love with forgiveness.

Currently there are four on-going chapters with two more planned. I salute and honor them and their families. They are among the most noble of souls I have ever known.

The tonalities and feeling of this veil were inspired by a prayer which Brother Robert Brody Piper prayed for me before saying goodbye at the cell door inside the Holmesburg Prison where he was incarcerated at the time. The God of it will linger in me forever.

Kunanamui agrees to let Silas hear one more song. He then hears the next veil, written by Hannibal, his seed yet unborn.

Immediately after writing Veil Nine I called my mother and played it for her. After a long period of silence on the phone she replied, “I will call you back in a little while baby.”

Silas:

Lord, so much suffering.

Look how much we suffer.

The jails are full of our children, the streets are full of our children, the graves are full of our babies, and nobody seems to care.

Kunanamui:

Now listen to me, dear Silas.

I would never leave you

or the people of Jonah.

Choir: As the people of Jonah

O God, how I thank you.

Great is the Lord God,

merciful and good, sacred, holy.

Kunanamui:

I will give you a gift.

It will make hot cold, and liberate your soul.

In it I will live with you and cry with you

for as long as the wind has tone,

for as long as hearts beat rhythms in the body.

Silas:

I love you, yes I do, so deeply.

Kunanamui:

It is a book of song.

It will save you from the pain of living.

Choir: As the people of Jonah

Sopranos, Second Altos, Second Tenors:

Lord keep us, Lord heal us,

God show us, Lord save us.

Lord hear our cry, hear our plea,

keep us close to you.

There is no hope without you.

Bring us back to you.

Free our minds

from the grip of death and destruction.

First Altos, First Tenors:

Lord, I love you, and I beg you,

God, have mercy, save our people.

Basses:

I thank you, Lord God.

Lost. We would be lost.

Sopranos, Altos and Tenors:

Lost in the desert of sand without you.

We would be lost!

Lost in the doorway of death without you.

We would be lost!

Lost in the belly of the beast without you.

We would be lost!

Lost on the auction block of hell without you.

We would be lost!

Lost in the hot fields of whips and blood without you.

We would be lost!

Lost in the streets of dogs and hoses without you.

We would be dead from the plans of the wicked.

Silas and Choir:

Can you hear God crying,

can you hear God weeping,

can you hear God saying

that we must care for one another?

Can't you hear the Lord crying,

can't you hear the Lord weeping,

can't you hear our God saying

that we should love one another?

Can you hear God crying,

can you hear God weeping,

can you hear God saying

that you must care for one another?

Can you hear God crying,

can you hear God weeping,

can you hear God saying

that we must love each other?

Kunanamui:

Silas, it is time for the wind to come for the leaf.

Silas:

Lord, may I hear just one more song from the book?

It's magic, healing, haunting.

One more before I go.

These songs that heal the soul.

Kunanamui:

Time to return ...

Here then is another song

written by your seed yet unborn.

9 Veil Nine

I Will Go To The Lord

For my Lord

Like my great grandfather, God is also my refuge,

my sanctuary, my ultimate desire, my song of songs.

The tones in this veil are rooted in the songs I heard my mother and grandparents sing in the cotton fields and in the tiny Live Oak Grove Baptist Church in Smithville, Texas. And like the blues, you must be it to sing it.

Soloist:

My dear Lord,

hear my cry for your love, your love.

Choir:

My dear Lord of love.

Go to the Lord, I will go to the Lord.

Soloist:

I will go to the Lord

with my cry, cry of love.

I'm gonna go to the Lord

with my cry, cry of love.

When my father is dead and gone

I'm gonna stand up and carry on.

I'm gonna go to the Lord

with my cry, cry of love.

When my mother is dead and gone

I'm gonna stand up and carry on.

I'm gonna go to the Lord

and I'll give him one of my cries of love.

My dear Lord, hear my cry for you love.

Choir:

I will go to the Lord

with my cry, cry of love.

Father is gone.

I will stand, carry on.

I will go to the Lord

with my cry, cry of love.

Mother is gone.

I will stand, carry on.

I will go to the Lord

with my cry, cry of love.

My dear Lord of love.

10 Veil Ten

One/Tono

For Nathaniel Thompson and Denise James

In the first veil the question is asked: who? This veil answers that question; Tono, meaning one in Kpelle. One confirms the commonality of all things.

Kunanamui returns Silas's spirit to his body lying on his deathbed in Texas where he is now surrounded by his daughters dressed in white, singing, praying, and weeping. They have opened the bedroom window to let his soul fly away home. The scent of burning pine cones follows his soul. His remains are

then buried in Clearview Cemetery on Upton Road. He left land, cattle, and Zion Hill Church of God In Christ where my family still worships. Silas's Church was also the first school for the People of Jonah in Bastrop County, Texas.

In the wake of Silas' love affair with The Creator, the light of God's tears and the songs of healing trail through the generations, through me and to us all.

Kunanamui:

And now the wind comes for you, my beautiful leaf of brown, red and gold.

Beneath the tree of your rich life you now lay.

Come from your bed of cedar.
I will bless all that you have left in this world.
The church of Zion Hill, your seed yet unborn.
Come, dear Silas,
and live forever in the peace of me.

Now who will seek the way?
And who will show the way?
And who will live the way?
And who will become the way,
that leads to the soul of me?

Kunanamui and Choir:

Me, me ...

Homage ...

Carole Haas Gravagno sat for well over an hour listening to me reveal the heart of this story and to my surprise and delight decided to commission it. When she came to the prison one of the Music Liberation Orchestra members remarked how her presence made him feel hopeful about his life. Carole is a human oasis in the social desert of life. She is happiest when others are at peace. I know of no one whose life is not enriched for having known her, and in many cases enriched even having never met her.

A special bouquet of wild flowers goes to the staff of Art Sanctuary and to Anne Ewers, Matt Wolf and The Kimmel Center Staff.

I have come to thank God each day for the Rev. Dr. Alyn E. Waller, pastor of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, and Minister Kenyatta Arrington, Sister Cassandra, and the Enon Tabernacle Baptist Choir.

Maestro Dirk Brossé: thank you for your deep love of music.

I salute the choirs of The Clayton White Singers; the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas Chancel Choir choir, Fr. Martini Shaw, Rector; and the Arch Street Presbyterian Church Choir, Rev. Bill Golderer pastor, and their directors: Mr. Clayton White, Dr. Jay Fluellen and Dr. Donald Dumpson.

This project would not have succeeded without the genius of Choral master Dr. Donald P. Dumpson.

Thanks to Pastor Moses Suah-Dennis and the sacred elders of the Kpelle nation in Landsdowne, PA, who are teaching me the native language of my great, great, great grandparents.

Thanks to the devotion of Rev. James Smith, Warden Joyce Brown, Lt. Brooker and the Holmesburg Prison Staff.

Many blessings to members of The Music Liberation Orchestra, First National Bank of Bastrop, Texas, La Belle Gallerie and to all principals and teachers, especially at the Camden and Kensington Schools of Creative and Performing Arts. To the extraordinary musicians on the stage for this première recording, I am honored by your presence, skill and genius.

Peace and the highest gratitude to my family: Sumai, Haile, Eternal, Krystal, Bill, Nile, William, and Carter.

– from The Journal of Hannibal © 2012 all rights reserved

Current members of Zion Hill Church of God In Christ



Photo by Randy Kerr



Janice Chandler-Eteme *Soprano*

Janice Chandler-Eteme first gained international prominence as a favourite soloist of Robert Shaw. She has continued to work with many distinguished conductors in the years since, and has been a guest soloist with the Los Angeles and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestras, among other leading orchestras in the United States and abroad. She holds degrees from Oakwood College and Indiana University and has studied with Virginia Zeani, Margaret Harshaw, Ginger Beazley and Todd Duncan.



Rodrick Dixon *Tenor*

Possessing a tenor voice of extraordinary range and versatility Rodrick Dixon has won the respect and attention of leading conductors, orchestras and opera companies throughout North America, undertaking leading rôles in a wide range of operas and appearing as a soloist in major repertoire from Beethoven to Zemlinsky. He has taken a notable part in a DVD of the latter's opera *Der Zwerg*.



Homayun Sakhi *Afghan rubâb*

Homayun Sakhi is a master of the Afghan rubâb, the double-chambered lute that is at the heart of Afghanistan's Pashtun klasik tradition. Born in Kabul in 1976, he was heir to one of Afghanistan's great musical dynasties. His father, Ghulam Sakhi was a student and brother-in-law of Ustad Mohammed Omar, a revered musician with a direct link to the origins of Afghan classical music. He has since settled in Fremont, California, where he has quickly established himself as a leader of the local musical community and is in high demand for performances as well as workshops and teaching.



Dirk Brossé *Conductor*

Dirk Brossé, born in Ghent, Belgium, is a multi-faceted composer and an internationally respected conductor. He began his music studies at the Conservatories of Ghent and Brussels and subsequently specialised in conducting, studying in Maastricht, Vienna and Cologne, where he was awarded his conducting diploma by the Musikhochschule. Alongside his many guest professorships, he is currently Professor of Composition and Conducting at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Ghent. Dirk Brossé has conducted all the leading Belgian orchestras and leading orchestras elsewhere in Europe, Asia and America. He was appointed by John Williams as Music Director and Principal Conductor of the international world tour of 'Star Wars: In Concert', which began touring in October 2009.

The Music Liberation Orchestra:

Hannibal Lokumbe *Trumpet*

(See page 4)

Byron C. Landham *Drums*

With some thirty recordings under his belt, Byron Landham is an extraordinarily accomplished drummer with over a hundred high profile festivals worldwide, including two appearances at Novokuznetsk in Siberia. Landham learned to read music and improve his synchronization by enrolling in Settlement Music School in 1981. As an adolescent he played side by side with the young Joey DeFrancesco, Christian McBride and Louis Taylor, and in 1986 cut his first demo CD with his brother, Christian McBride, and Edward Simon. He has continued with an impressive performing roster.



Mogauwane Mahloele *Percussion*

Mogauwane Mahloele was born a drummer, and learned to master his instruments through countless hours observing, participating, practising, rehearsing rhythms, and making the instruments, in order to fully understand their capabilities. Mahloele was born and raised under the apartheid system and worked to see it dismantled. These struggles frame his music, and his soul. He has been playing music, both traditional and traditionally-inspired, for more than forty years. He is accomplished in both the making and playing of African drums and other instruments. He is also a sculptor, painter, actor, and audio engineer.



Anthony Wonsey *Piano*

An adventurous yet flexible pianist, Anthony Wonsey started playing music when he was six. After earning a full scholarship to Berklee, from which he graduated in 1994, he moved to Boston and played locally with Roy Hargrove and Antonio Hart, among others. While still at Berklee, Wonsey toured with Christopher Hollyday, Nnenna Freelon, and Kenny Garrett. During the past few years Anthony Wonsey has played regularly and recorded with the groups of Carl Allen and Nicholas Payton.



Nimrod Speaks *Bass*

Born in 1983 in Philadelphia, Nimrod Speaks is a trained bassist, composer and educator both on electric and double bass. He began playing at the age of sixteen on an electric Fender bass while in high school under the tutorship of Ricardo Jackson. He later was introduced to the double bass during his first semester in college. Still residing in Philadelphia, he performs in and around Philadelphia and New York City.



Photo by Anthony Dean



Paula D. Holloway *Vocalist*

A native Philadelphian, Paula Holloway is a sought-after background vocalist and musician. At a very young age she recorded various solos with several youth choirs. She served as the first Minister of Music for Calvary Baptist Church and currently directs the Gospel Choir of St. Raymond of Penafort Catholic Church.



Reverend Dr. Alyn E. Waller

Since July 1994, the Reverend Dr. Alyn E. Waller has been the Senior Pastor of the Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is a highly sought-after revivalist, lecturer, author, singer and musician, with a passion for the development of youth. Among his many achievements is his sponsorship of the music program of the Martin Luther King High School, where he is also the school's assistant wrestling coach.

The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

A founding resident company of The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia is a 33-member professional ensemble led by Music Director Dirk Brossé. Founded in 1964, the Chamber Orchestra has a well-established reputation for distinguished performances of repertoire from the Baroque period through the twenty-first century. The orchestra has performed with such internationally acclaimed guest artists as Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Mstislav Rostropovich, Isaac Stern, Rudolf Serkin, The Eroica Trio, Jean-Pierre Rampal, The Romeros Guitar Quartet, Julie Andrews, Bernadette Peters, Ben Folds, Elvis Costello, Sylvia McNair, Steven Isserlis, Joseph Silverstein, Ransom Wilson, Gerard Schwarz, Jahja Ling and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, among others The ensemble travels regularly, having toured the United States, Europe, and Israel.

- Meichen Liao-Barnes** *Violin* • **Doris Hall-Gulati** *Clarinet*
- Karen Schubert** • **Lyndsie Wilson** *French Horns*
- Brian Kuszyk** • **Steven Heitzer** *Trumpets*
- Timothy Soberick** • **Michael Purdy** *Tenor Trombones*
- Barry McCommon** *Bass Trombone* • **Paul Erion** *Tuba*
- Barry Dove** *Percussion*



Photo by Janelle McVey

The Celebration Choir:

Enon Tabernacle Mass Choir and Men's Choir • The Germantown Concert Chorus • The Clayton White Singers • The Arch Street Presbyterian Church Choir • Sounds of Joy Music Ministry



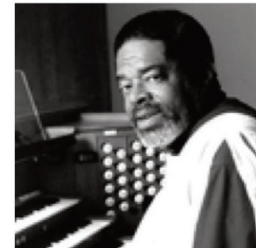
Enon Tabernacle Mass Choir & Men's Choir • Kenyatta Arrington

The Enon Tabernacle Mass Choir was founded in 1876 and is the oldest choir in the region, boasting from eighty to a hundred members and regularly singing for the congregation of over ten thousand at the Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church. The choir also performs regularly at the Kimmel Center's Summer Solstice Celebration and at other venues in the community. At the time of this recording, it was conducted by the organist Kenyatta Arrington who is currently working on his doctorate degree in music.



The Germantown Chorus • Cailin Marcel Manson

Philadelphia native Cailin Marcel Manson has worked as a baritone soloist, conductor and teacher at major concert venues throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. A member of the National Association of Negro Musicians and the Conductors Guild, Manson is currently the Director of the Germantown Institute for the Vocal Arts, Artistic Director and Conductor of the Germantown Concert Chorus, Music Director of the Bennington County Choral Society, and Director of Music at The Putney School.



The Clayton White Singers • Clayton White

A retired Professor of Music and Department Chair at the Community College of Philadelphia, Clayton White is currently Music Director and Conductor of his professional chorus, The Clayton White Singers. As chorus master for Opera Ebony and Opera North, Dr. White has prepared choirs for productions at The Academy of Music and other venues in Philadelphia. Additionally, he has performed as guest conductor and clinician for numerous music festivals and choral workshops. An acknowledged expert on African-American music, he has written articles, given lectures and conducted concerts in the discipline.

The Arch Street Presbyterian Choir • J. Donald Dumpson

(See next page)



Sounds of Joy Music Ministry • Sheila D. Booker

Sheila D. Booker studied Music Education at West Chester University and Vocal Performance at Temple University. She also holds a certificate in Church Administration from the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP). She is Music Director at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Artistic Director of Sounds of Joy! (A Choral Music Ministry). In recent years she has also been an Associate Director of Music Ministries at LTSP, a choral music specialist with the Philadelphia School District and Outreach Director/Recruiter for the world-renowned Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale.



J. Donald Dumpson *Choirmaster*

J. Donald Dumpson is minister of music and arts at the Arch Street Presbyterian Church (Philadelphia, PA) where, among his many duties, he directs The Arch Street Presbyterian Church Choir. Committed to education, he was the founding conductor and artistic director of the Westminster Choir College Jubilee Singers. As well as directing The Celebration Choir which, for this world première recording of *Can You Hear God Crying?*, comprises the Enon Tabernacle Mass Choir and Men's Choir, the Germantown Concert Chorus, The Clayton White Singers, the Arch Street Presbyterian Church Choir and Sounds of Joy Music Ministry, he has acted as producer, artistic director, music director, and chorus master for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, and the Philadelphia and New Jersey Symphony Orchestras. He was also the co-producer of the 'An Evening of Stars' telecast benefiting the United Negro College Fund and featuring stars from Oprah Winfrey to Quincy Jones and Patti LaBelle.

Recorded in Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts,
Philadelphia, USA, 21 September 2012

Score Reader: Charles Kaier

Front of House Audio: Dave Connor

Audio recording: Joe Hannigan

Mixing & Post-Production at Weston Sound and Video

Co-producers: The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

(Anne Ewers, President & CEO; Ed Cambron, Executive Vice-President;

Matt Wolf, Vice-President of Artistic Programming and Theatrical Presentations)

The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

(Peter H. Gistelinck, Executive Director; Jeanette Honig Grafman, Director of Orchestra
Operations; J. Robert Loy, Librarian and Stage Manager)

Publisher: Hannibal Lokumbe Music

Commissioned by Carole Haas-Gravagno in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the
Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia, PA, USA

Sponsored by PECO, Pfizer Foundation, M&T, Independence Blue Cross, ACE Group

This recording is also available on Naxos DVD 2.110357

Front cover image: Will Nathanson

Can You Hear God Crying?

is dedicated to my mother



Lillian Earl Peterson