



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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All Classical Portland and WQXR Partner for Bi-Coastal LIVE Broadcast of World Premiere of Damien Geter's *An African American Requiem*

The radio stations will simulcast Damien Geter's first-of-its-kind requiem LIVE from Portland, OR, on Saturday, May 7, 2022, at 5:50 PM PT / 8:50 PM ET, performed by Oregon Symphony and Resonance Ensemble. The program will be syndicated to stations across the USA in June, free of charge.

PORTLAND, OREGON – [All Classical Portland](#), the Pacific Northwest's premiere 24-hour classical music radio station, is teaming up with [WQXR](#) in New York to present a simultaneous live broadcast of the world premiere of Portland-based composer **Damien Geter's *An African American Requiem***.

Commissioned by Portland's **Resonance Ensemble**, this pivotal work memorializes the lives of Black Americans lost to racial violence in a first-of-its-kind requiem. A collaboration between Damien Geter, Resonance Ensemble, and the **Oregon Symphony**, the world premiere will be performed at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland, OR, on **Saturday, May 7, 2022, at 5:50 PM PT (8:50 PM ET)**. The live broadcast will be available at 89.9 FM in Portland, 105.9 FM in New York, and streaming worldwide at allclassical.org.

"As a Black composer in today's America, I feel like I've been writing this my entire life," says Damien Geter. "I was hoping there would be a time we wouldn't need this piece, but I think we always will. I hope *An African American Requiem* leads to important action that affects change."

The requiem includes African American spirituals as well as texts from civil rights activists Ida B. Wells and Jamilia Land. It also highlights words dedicated to Eric Garner, a line from a poem by **Antwon Rose**, and words written and performed by Portland poet **Dr. S. Renee Mitchell**.

Originally slated to premiere in April 2020, the requiem was put on hold due to the ongoing global pandemic. The renewed production will feature the Oregon Symphony and the African American Requiem Choir, made up of singers from Resonance Ensemble, Kingdom Sound Gospel Choir, and Portland-based choirs. **William Eddins** will conduct, and Resonance's Artistic Director **Dr. Katherine FitzGibbon** will prepare the chorus. The concert will also feature a quartet of

renowned African American opera singers: **Brandie Sutton**, soprano; **Karmesha Peake**, mezzo-soprano; **Bernard Holcomb**, tenor; and **Kenneth Overton**, baritone.

The radio broadcast will be co-hosted by **Suzanne Nance**, All Classical Portland President and CEO, and **Terrance McKnight**, WQXR's evening host. All Classical Portland's **Sarah Zwinklis** and WQXR's **Eileen Delahunty** will produce the program.

"An African American Requiem and its recent composition for chorus and orchestra is a painful reminder of the horror and ongoing threat of racial apathy and intolerance," says Terrance McKnight. *"It is also a reminder of the power of music to bring us together as a community of concerned and compassionate listeners around the globe. I look forward to bringing the world premiere to our listeners."*

All Classical Portland and WQXR are also partnering to syndicate the program to radio stations across the country, following the world premiere. The syndicated presentation will be available in early June 2022, in time for stations to observe Juneteenth with their own broadcast of the program. More information about syndication can be found at allclassical.org/requiem.

"This is public radio at its best," says Suzanne Nance. "Amplifying art that reflects our society, and uplifting the powerful work of composers like Damien Geter, is at the heart of our mission at All Classical Portland. We are proud of this collaboration with the performers and New York City's WQXR. By working together, we will increase the national and global access to an important work, through an unprecedented live broadcast event."

Damien Geter and Dr. S. Renee Mitchell have collaborated with All Classical Portland in the past. In 2020, the station commissioned and premiered Geter's String Quartet No. 1 "Neo-Soul." The same year, Dr. Mitchell was commissioned by the station to author a poem revolving around the words "joy," "legacy," and "voice." Her reading of the poem, "Harmonizing with Joy" is currently spotlighted at allclassical.org, as part of National Poetry Month in April.

Those interested in attending the May 7 performance in-person at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall can visit the Oregon Symphony's website at orsymphony.org for tickets and more information.

To learn more about the live broadcast and All Classical Portland, visit allclassical.org. To learn more about WQXR visit wqxr.org.



MAY 7, 2022 | LIVE RADIO BROADCAST 5:50 PM PT / 8:50 PM ET

AN AFRICAN AMERICAN REQUIEM

BY DAMIEN GETER

RESONANCE ENSEMBLE

OREGON SYMPHONY

All Classical PORTLAND

WQXR

WHO:

- All Classical Portland
- WQXR
- Composer **Damien Geter**
- Conductor **William Eddins**
- Oregon Symphony
- The African American Requiem Chorus and Portland's Resonance Ensemble
- With guest vocal soloists:
 - **Brandie Sutton**, soprano
 - **Karmesha Peake**, mezzo-soprano
 - **Bernard Holcomb**, tenor
 - **Kenneth Overton**, baritone

WHAT: Live bi-coastal radio broadcast of the world premiere of **Damien Geter's** *An African American Requiem*

WHERE:

- All Classical Portland: 89.9 FM in Portland, OR and **allclassical.org**
- WQXR: 105.9 FM in New York, NY and **wqxr.org**

WHEN: Saturday, May 7, 2022, at 5:50 PM PT / 8:50 PM ET

ABOUT:



Photo: Leah Nash

Composer Damien Geter infuses classical music with various styles from the African diaspora to create music that furthers the cause for social justice. Commission credits include Resonance Ensemble, The University of Michigan, The Washington Chorus, and Opera Theater Oregon, among others. An operatic bass, Damien has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Seattle Opera, Portland Opera, and several regional companies across the nation.

All Classical Portland is Portland, Oregon's vibrant 24/hr. arts and classical music public radio station, consistently ranked in the top three stations in the USA, recognized for innovative programming, community impact, and collaborations. All Classical Portland is the home of the award-winning Recording Inclusivity Initiative. For more information, visit **allclassical.org**.

WQXR is New York City's only all-classical music station, immersing listeners in the city's rich musical life on-air at 105.9FM, online at WQXR.org, and in person through live events and performances. WQXR presents new and landmark classical recordings, as well as live concerts

from New York City's concert halls and performance venues, and broadcasts essential destination programs including Carnegie Hall Live, Metropolitan Opera Saturday Matinee Broadcasts, New York Philharmonic This Week, New York in Concert, This Week with Yannick, and the Young Artists Showcase. WQXR also produces podcasts that reach new audiences for the artform: The Open Ears Project; Helga; and—in partnership with the Metropolitan Opera—the critically acclaimed opera podcast, Aria Code. Learn more at wqxr.org.

Radio Hosts:



Photo: Matthew Septimus

Terrance McKnight, weekday evening host for WQXR, shares his commitment to humanity and music by “bringing everyone’s culture to the table, ensuring a place for all.” He has written, produced and hosted audio documentaries on Langston Hughes, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Hazel Scott, Florence Price, Harry Belafonte, and more. McKnight is an artistic advisor for the Harlem Chamber Players, a member of the Artistic Committee of The Hermitage Artist Retreat, serves on the board of directors of the Bagby Foundation and the MacDowell Colony and is the voice of recent media campaigns for Carnegie Hall and the Studio

Museum in Harlem. He is the author of the forthcoming book *Concert Black*, anticipating a 2022 release by Abrams Books.



Photo: AJ Coots

Suzanne Nance was recognized as a “2022 Woman of Influence” by Portland Business Journal for her work as the President and CEO of All Classical Portland and the International Children’s Arts Network, and named one of Portland’s “best radio personalities” for her work as host of *Sunday Brunch*. She is the creator of the Emmy® Award winning TV program *MaineArts!* and has served as the voice of the internationally syndicated Lyric Opera of Chicago radio series; the Grant Park Music Festival, Milwaukee Symphony, and Bravo! Vail Music Festival radio series.

Performers:

Resonance Ensemble (commissioners of *An African American Requiem*) is a professional vocal ensemble based in Portland, Oregon, creating powerful programs that promote meaningful social change. The ensemble works to amplify voices that have long been silenced, and does so through moving, thematic concerts that highlight solo and choral voices, new and underrepresented composers, visual, and other performing artists. Under Artistic Director Dr. Katherine FitzGibbon, Resonance Ensemble performs challenging and diverse music, always with an eye toward unusual collaborations with artistic partners such as poets, jazz musicians, singer-songwriters, painters, and dancers from around Portland. Learn more at resonancechoral.org.

Oregon Symphony, led by Music Director David Danzmayr, is multi-Grammy Award-nominated and ranks as one of America’s major orchestras. It produces several hundred concerts and award-

winning education and community programs each year, while innovating on stage through multimedia series such as SoundSights, Sounds of Home and SoundStories. Celebrating its 125th anniversary in the 2021/22 season, Oregon Symphony is committed to building the audiences of tomorrow through breakthrough artistic programs with a wide-ranging coalition of cultural thought-leaders and musical innovators. For more information, visit orsymphony.org.



Photo: Elijah Hasan

Dr. S. Renee Mitchell is an educator, multi-media heARTivist, and social-justice minded consultant on youth voice, social-emotional learning, and post traumatic growth. Renee is well-known in Portland, OR as a former columnist for The Oregonian, where she was nominated twice for the prestigious Pulitzer Prize and was named the No. 1 newspaper columnist in five Western states. A longtime youth-empowerment advocate, Renee is the visionary behind the award-winning, youth-resiliency building organization I Am M.O.R.E. (Making Ourselves Resilient Everyday).



Photo: Courtesy of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra

William Eddins is the Music Director Emeritus of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and a frequent guest conductor of major orchestras throughout the world. His previous engagements have included the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, the symphony orchestras of San Francisco, Boston Minnesota, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Detroit, Dallas, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Houston, as well as the Los Angeles and Buffalo Philharmonics. A native of Buffalo, NY, Mr. Eddins attended the Eastman School of Music, studying with David Effron and graduating at the age of eighteen.



Photo: Rachel Hadiashar

Dr. Katherine FitzGibbon is the Artistic Director of Portland's Resonance Ensemble. She is also Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Lewis & Clark College, where she conducts two of the three choirs and oversees the vibrant voice, choral, and opera areas. She has conducted choirs at Harvard, Boston, Cornell, and Clark Universities, and at the University of Michigan and has served on the faculty of Berkshire Choral International. In 2014, she was an inaugural winner of the Lorry Lokey Faculty Excellence Award, honoring "inspired teaching, rigorous scholarship, demonstrated leadership, and creative accomplishments."