

78TH SEASON OF

# CONCERTS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART | FEBRUARY 2, 2020





**left** Diane Monroe, photo by Peter Checcia. **right** PUBLIQuartet, photo by Lelanie Foster

# PROGRAM

**Diane Monroe, composer, violin, riti, leader**  
**With PUBLIQuartet**

**Ayodele Maakheru, banjos**

**Yacouba Sissoko, kora**

**Lee W. Smith, acoustic bass**

**Leonard “Doc” Gibbs, percussion**

**Charlotte Blake Alston, narrator**

**Curlee Raven Holton, visual artist**

*Violin Woman, African Dreams*

**February 2, 2020 | 3:30 p.m.**

**West Building, West Garden Court**

Processional: Chant “Upendo, Ukweli, Umoja”\*

Somebody’s Knockin’ at My Door

Moons Too

Moons

Waiting

Groove #3

Release

Lament

Courage

## **Intermission**

African Dreams

Violin Solo

Words

Recessional: Wo YaYa “We Will Get There”

*This concert is part of a series of performances by female violinists, showcasing the brilliance and stylistic versatility of the instrument.*

\*Title translation: “Upendo, Ukweli, Umoja” in Swahili: love, truth, and unity

All repertoire composed by Diane Monroe except the traditional spiritual “Somebody’s Knockin’ at My Door” and Wo YaYa “We Will Get There,” composed by Sol Amarfio, with lyrics by Teddy Osei.

# THE MUSICIANS

## **Diane Monroe, composer, violin, riti, leader**

Diane Monroe, a native Philadelphian, is a violinist whose versatility and expressive artistry consistently bring both jazz and classical audiences to their feet. Her visibility as a jazz artist began with her long-standing membership as first violinist of the Uptown String Quartet and the Max Roach Double Quartet. These critically acclaimed groups have appeared on *The Cosby Show*, *CBS News Sunday Morning*, and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and have recorded on the Soul Note, Philips/Polygram, and Mesa/Bluemoon labels.

Monroe is more than a fine performer. Her original compositions and arrangements have been highlighted on television shows and recordings, as well as in performances with the Uptown String Quartet and the Max Roach Double Quartet in major concert halls and festivals throughout the world. In 2018, she won both a Pew Fellowship and a Pew Project grant from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. The Pew Project grant funded her 2019 project, *Violin Woman, African Dreams*. Concurrently, her work titled *Vibes* and her orchestration of Fred Rogers's *You Are Special* appear on the Sony Classical Records' soundtrack recording for the film *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*. Recently, Monroe has performed in ensembles led by Odean Pope, Bobby Zankel's Warriors of the Wonderful Sound, and Dave Allen's residency ensemble at the Kimmel Center, as well as with Tony Miceli, vibraphonist. During her four-year run with the String Trio of New York, she toured in concert with Joe Lovano, Oliver Lake, Anthony Davis, Bang on a Can All-Stars, and literary artist, Quincy Troupe. She has also performed with Reggie Workman, Regina Carter, and Don Byron. Having won the coveted Pro Musicis Recital Award as a classical artist in 1983, Monroe performed violin recital debuts at New York's Merkin Hall, Los Angeles's Schoenberg Hall, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Her most recent solo premieres include David Baker's *Violin Concerto* with the Duluth Superior Symphony, Sarasate's *Carmen Fantasy* with the Harlem Symphony, and Paul Salerni's *The Big Sword and the Little Broom* on Monarch Records. Diane Monroe has taught violin and coached chamber music at Oberlin Conservatory, Temple University, Swarthmore College, and The Quartet Program, New York. She is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and has also attended Oberlin Conservatory of Music and Michigan State University.

## **PUBLIQuartet**

Applauded by the *Washington Post* as "a perfect encapsulation of today's trends in chamber music," PUBLIQuartet's creative, interactive programming presents contemporary works, original compositions, and improvisations expanding the role of the string quartet. Selected by Concert Artists Guild as 2013's New Music/New Places Ensemble, PUBLIQuartet was also recognized by Chamber Music America (CMA) in 2015 with the ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award. In January 2019, it was selected to receive CMA's third annual Innovator Award.

PUBLIQuartet's commitment to support emerging composers inspired the ensemble's innovative program, PUBLIQ Access, designed in 2014 to promote such composers and to present a wide variety of underrepresented music for string quartet—from classical, jazz, and electronic, to non-notated, world, and improvised music. The quartet showcases at least one of these works on virtually every program, and also gives regular performances in New York to present the newest pieces in this growing catalogue.

Founded in 2010, PUBLIQuartet has been presented by the American Composers Orchestra, the Virginia Arts Festival, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, and the Chautauqua Institution. The quartet has collaborated with members of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), JACK Quartet, jazz tuba legend Bob Stewart, and innovative jazz clarinetist/composer Don Byron.

Curtis Stewart, violin

Jannina Norpoth, violin

Nick Revel, viola

Hamilton Berry, cello

## **Ayodele Maakheru, banjos**

Ayodele Maakheru is a musician, composer, and teacher who studied at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, City College of New York, and Brooklyn College. He plays a variety of instruments, including guitar, banjos, mandolins, ukuleles, bass, harmonica, and djembe. He has performed, toured, and/or recorded with a variety of artists, such as Lionel Hampton, Savion Glover, Audra McDonald, Eartha Kitt, Leslie Uggams, Phylicia Rashad, Gregory Hines, Miriam Makeba, The Fifth Dimension, and the New York Philharmonic. He has been a featured soloist with the Clef Club Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and appeared on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, along with the Noise/Funk band. Maakheru has been recognized as a winner of the 2004 Bronx Council on the Arts Brio Award for music composition, as well as an award recipient of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) for composition. He has recorded three albums, *Another Country*, *Sunship*, and *Distant Traveler*.

**Yacouba Sissoko, kora**

Yacouba Sissoko was born in Kita, Mali, to a well-known djely family. Djelys for centuries have been the traditional musicians and keepers of the factual history and fables of past rulers, nobles, social groups, and families. The kora was the traditional instrument that djelys played. At the age of nine, Sissoko started learning the kora and the oral traditions associated with it from his grandfather, until he moved to Bamako, Mali's capital, to attend the National Institute of the Arts. Based in the capital, he caught the attention of the music world and began touring with noted international African artists, which eventually led him to settle in the United States in 1998. He has performed, toured, and recorded with well-known African musicians, including Baaba Maal, Sekou (Bambino) Diabate, and Kerfala Kante. In addition to African music, Sissoko has also performed and recorded with a variety of artists, such as Harry Belafonte, Paul Simon, and Lauren Hill. He regularly tours with Regina Carter, Rachel Brown, and his own band SIYA.

**Lee W. Smith, acoustic bass**

Lee W. Smith is a Philadelphia-born jazz bassist. He has performed for over forty years with many R&B and jazz legends, including The Delphonics, Blue Magic, Billy Paul, Mongo Santamaría, Sonny Fortune, Odean Pope, and academy-award nominee Terrance Howard. Smith continues to expand his accomplishments as a composer, arranger, producer, and educator. He is also the proud father of bass great Christian McBride.

**Leonard “Doc” Gibbs, percussion**

Philadelphia-native Leonard “Doc” Gibbs received his so-called “Doc”-torate from the late, legendary jazz saxophonist, Grover Washington, Jr. While recording the *Live at the Bijou* album in 1976, Grover acknowledged Doc for prescribing an herbal remedy that cured Grover's nasty night-before-taping cold. He then gave Doc this nickname that appropriately describes a musician who performs with the precision of a surgeon. Early in his career, Doc worked with many of the music industry's top artists, including Freddie Hubbard, George Benson, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band, Nancy Wilson, and Anita Baker. Doc has also worked with contemporary Grammy Award-winning artists Erykah Badu and Wyclef Jean. For the past twenty-five years, Doc has been a dedicated educator, teaching the art of hand-drumming and percussion. In 2015, he relocated to Los Angeles, bringing his knowledge and experience to the West Coast, once again getting involved in teaching drum and percussion instruments. In Los Angeles, he also created Baba Doc's Healing Sound Therapy, a practice that uses percussion as a form of healing and reconnecting.

**Charlotte Blake Alston, narrator**

Charlotte Blake Alston is an internationally acclaimed storyteller, narrator, librettist, and singer who performs in venues throughout North America and abroad. For nineteen years, she was the featured host, storyteller, and narrator on the Carnegie Hall Family and School Concert series and performed as an artist for the Lincoln Center Institute. She has made multiple appearances at the Smithsonian Institution, the Kennedy Center, and festivals around the country, including the National Storytelling Festival, the National Festival of Black Storytelling, and the Timpanogos Festival. Alston has received numerous honors and awards, including a Pew Fellowship, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Artist of the Year Award, the National Storytelling Network's Circle of Excellence Award, and the Zora Neale Hurston Award. In 2016, she was one of two storytellers selected to represent the National Association of Black Storytellers at the weekend opening of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

**Curlee Raven Holton, visual artist**

A highly regarded professor, painter, and master printmaker, Curlee Raven Holton has exhibited his work throughout the world. His paintings, drawings, and prints are held by major museums and collections in the United States and abroad. His most recent solo exhibition, *Journey: The Artistry of Curlee Raven Holton*, was held at the University of Maryland Global Campus. Holton earned his master of fine arts degree from Kent State University with a concentration in printmaking and his bachelor's degree in drawing and painting from the Cleveland Institute of Fine Arts. He served as the David M. and Linda Roth Professor of Art at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, where he taught printmaking and African American art history. Holton founded the Experimental Printmaking Institute with a vision to provide artists with the time, space, materials, and professional support needed to create new work. This vision was realized with more than two hundred works produced. In 2014, he was appointed executive director of the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora at the University of Maryland, College Park. In 2015, he received the Anyone Can Fly Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2018, Holton was awarded an honorary doctorate in art and philosophy from the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, New York City.

# PROGRAM NOTE

With musical boundaries lessening, artists are ever-more challenged to define our own identities and voices. With this project, I am challenging myself to not only disrupt musical classifications and hierarchies, but also to examine what it means for me to be an African-American woman.

—Diane Moore.

Composer and violinist Diane Monroe draws on her decades-long, genre-defying career to craft a musical memoir that bridges jazz, classical, and traditional African music, revealing an African-American violinist's trials and triumphs. Her *Violin Woman, African Dreams* is inspired by the environment and by objects in The Colored Girls Museum (TCGM), a unique house museum located in a Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia.

Written for violin, banjo, bass, the West African kora (a long-necked, twenty-one-string, plucked instrument), and percussion, the composition provides a framework for improvisations by each player, and weaves a musical narrative that incorporates sound, visual art by Curlee Raven Holton, and spoken word. Monroe's acclaimed collaborators have included the adventurous string ensemble PUBLIQuartet, banjoist and Broadway veteran Ayodele Maakheru, and Yacouba Sissoko, an internationally recognized master of West African kora and traditional storytelling.

*This concert is presented in conjunction with a Works in Progress conversation, featuring Diane Monroe and Curlee R. Holton discussing the creation of Violin Woman, African Dreams, on Monday, February 3, at 12:10 and 1:10 p.m., in the West Building Lecture Hall.*

# TEXTS

## “Nina S.”

I took out your albums today  
And I listened to you  
For the first time in two years  
I listened to you  
I was so angry-hurt  
Disappointed to find that  
You are human too—  
I just couldn't listen anymore  
Today I took out your albums  
And I listened to you  
And your Black voice  
Mellowed me  
Welcome me back  
Black Woman  
Welcome me back  
While I listen to you.

Poem for Nina Simone, by Kofi Aboygese (aka Arthur Burwell, Jr.) and known to Diane as her dear “Uncle Artie,” September 25, 1982

## Excerpt from “Things Coming Things Going”

I would  
Swim to Africa  
(If she would have me)  
But so much has been lost  
of my native self.  
Would she remember, and claim me, or would she smile graciously...

Poem by Glee Ivory, 1993. Ivory is a writer whose work has appeared in the *New York Times* series on Africa, after the artist returned from a Fulbright Fellowship to West Africa.

## “We will Get There”

We are going.  
Heaven knows where we are going.  
We know we're there.

We will get there.  
Heaven knows how we will get there.  
We know we will.

It will be hard, we know, and the road will be muddy and rough,  
but we'll get there.  
Heaven knows how we will get there.  
We know we will.

Wo YaYa (WoYaYa)  
Wo YaYe (WoYaYe)

## Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Eighth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin Concerts

Unless otherwise noted, concerts are held in the West Building, West Garden Court.

### Nordic Voices

*Music from the Time of Charles V*  
Celebrating *Alonso Berruguete: First Sculptor of Renaissance Spain*  
February 9, 3:30 p.m.

### Eighth Blackbird

*Ice 'n' SPICE*  
Works by Nina Shekhar, Fjola Evans, Andy Akiho, and others.  
February 16, 3:30 p.m.

### Third Coast Percussion

Music of Devonté Hynes (aka Blood Orange), Ryan Lott (aka Son Lux), and iconic composer Philip Glass.  
February 23, 3:30 p.m.

### Sound Sketch

#### Suspicious Cheeselords

*From the Heavens*  
Music illuminating the Gallery's holdings of images of heavenly beings.  
February 28, 12:10 p.m.  
West Building Rotunda

### McGill-McHale Trio

Works by Saint-Saëns, Rachmaninov, and others.  
March 1, 3:30 p.m.

## General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed.

Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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