



ÇEDILLE

AMERICAN STORIES

ANTHONY
MCGILL

PACIFICA
QUARTET

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3 II. Awashoha (4:37)

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TT: (72:58)

*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

PERSONAL NOTES

Through music we connect with our stories. Music opens a pathway for us to empathize with each other and be present in our shared humanity. Through music we communicate our different identities and, when they are presented together, embrace the beauty that lies in the diversity of sound and story.

Music gives us space to be present to ideas and truths for which we don't yet have words, places we've never been, and people we've never met. We connect with the story of others to share in the beauty of our differences. The music we hear and feel in our lives charts our identities and honors our history over time. It gives witness to the people surrounding us, and it tracks our migration through time and place. Music joins us to our greater community around the world.

When you make an album, you are sending the world a message in a bottle to the future, it's a record of humanity. As an artist you don't often get to put together a collection of living composers that you love. I am in awe of every piece on this album and how each communicates with the other.

We are not only telling a story that is within each individual work, we are sharing the story of the composers themselves, and ourselves as the performers. This combination of energies meeting through music is something that I hope you, our audience, enjoy and appreciate.

**ANTHONY
MCGILL**

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PACIFICA QUARTET

Like our nation itself, our backgrounds and identities are rich and varied, diverse and profound. Each new musical creation contributes a fresh voice and a unique viewpoint to our story, while ineluctably dealing with the past and shining a light towards the future. We hope that you enjoy this album and find inspiration, as we do, in the bountiful sonic tapestries that continue to be woven by American Stories.

"EACH NEW MUSICAL CREATION CONTRIBUTES A FRESH VOICE AND A UNIQUE VIEWPOINT TO OUR STORY, WHILE INELUCTABLY DEALING WITH THE PAST AND SHINING A LIGHT TOWARDS THE FUTURE."





PROGRAM NOTES

FOUR ANGELS

**RICHARD
DANIELPOUR**

richard-danielpour.com

I composed *Four Angels* in April 2020 for Anthony McGill and the Catalyst Quartet on a commission by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The concert that was supposed to take place at the Met the following concert season was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A live-streamed online performance occurred later in 2021.

The work was composed to bring a deeper awareness in America of why Black lives do indeed matter. The title refers to four little girls who were murdered in 1963 in a church in Birmingham Alabama, victims of a hate crime. This event in our history, one of many blemishes that stain the American historical landscape, is a reminder of how destructive racism can be, whether it is covert or overt. It behooves us, especially now, at a time when racism is once again showing its face more openly, to remind ourselves of the insidious and malevolent nature of such behavior and such crimes. These four little girls, who were martyred, serve as a symbol for the hope and innocence that many years ago in America was suffocated. The music that I wrote 57 years later is a memorial to their memory and to the memory of those who, in the past, refused to be daunted by such deplorable acts. This music also stands as a small testament to the choice for a better



A fist raised in solidarity for George Floyd

"THIS MUSIC ALSO STANDS AS A SMALL TESTAMENT TO THE CHOICE FOR A BETTER PATH, ONE CONSISTING OF THE COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING THAT WE MUST HAVE FOR ONE ANOTHER."

path, one consisting of the compassion and understanding that we must have for one another. And although neither neo-Nazis, nor Proud Boys, nor members of the alt-right will likely comprehend what is written in these paragraphs, this music, and these words are composed for those who are willing to hear and understand.

QUINTET FOR CLARINET & STRING QUARTET

JAMES LEE III

jameslee3music.com

"I NAMED THE
SECOND
MOVEMENT
AWASHOHA,
WHICH IS A
CHOCTAW
WORD THAT
MEANS 'PLAY
SOMEWHERE.'"

Quintet for Clarinet & String Quartet is a four-movement work inspired by historical aspects of indigenous Americans. The first movement, *Forgotten Emblems*, uses what I call an "inverted shofar theme" that can be heard at the beginning of Nathaniel Dett's "The Ordering of Moses" and William Dawson's "Negro Folk Symphony." This movement also refers to various paintings of "An Emblem of America" from the 18th century. There are also many moments when I try to imitate an Indian Pow Wow. I named the second movement *Awashoha*, which is a Choctaw word that means "play somewhere." This serves as the scherzo movement. Movement three serves as a kind of lament and references the reclassification of many indigenous people and their removal to other regions of the country. Then, finally, movement four is a short dance celebration of the lives represented in the various paintings of "An Emblem of America."

HIGH SIERRA SONATA

BEN SHIRLEY

benshirleymusic.com

In the summer of 2019, I was invited by a friend, Ryan Navales, to join him in serving as a volunteer at an aid station on the course of the Bishop High Sierra Ultras ultra marathon. It marked my second trip to the Owens Valley, to visit my friend, who I'd met while we were both beginning the process of recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, while living at a homeless shelter in Los Angeles' notorious Skid Row.

Way up in the Eastern Sierras, I soon learned that the weather, much like life, can change on a dime. As the mountains wake up, it is clear, cool, and sparkling with life. But within minutes, it is sleeting, freezing, howling, and ultimately covered in snow. The sun returns, and the rain returns, and on it went, before relative calm set in at the end of our 12-hour shift. Every season came and went through the course of a single day, which couldn't help but remind me of the seasons of life, and in some cases the seasons of emotions we all go through, in a day, a week, a month, or a year.

But regardless of the circumstances beyond my control there in the Eastern Sierras, the majestic beauty, the camaraderie amongst volunteers, the perseverance of the runners, and a decade-long friendship rooted in a shared experience remained as rock solid as the mountains we stood on.

SHOTGUN HOUSES

VALERIE COLEMAN

vcolemanmusic.com

Shotgun Houses is the first of three installments that celebrate the life of Muhammad Ali, a man who carried the pride of Louisville with him everywhere throughout his career. The title refers to the architectural landscape of his childhood community of West Louisville, which was once considered an indicator of poverty, but has since developed a historical nostalgia. In the first installment, I took a personal look at the young man, Cassius Clay, with the intention of introducing West Louisville, a community in which Ali and I were raised.

The first movement, *ShotGun Houses*, is a sketch of the neighborhoods of West Louisville in the 1950s period. Inspiration for the movement came from observing photos and tracing the path to get to Ali's childhood home on Grand Ave. from my own childhood home just blocks away.

With a down-home wail, the beginning is a nod to Southern life and the view of shotgun houses, all lined up in a row. Soon after, the music shifts and the clarinetist's upper register is prominently featured, symbolizing the bold personalities that all West Louisville children learn early on within their interactions: to verbally boast and tease one another as a part of playing in the streets. This was a time when the area was a thriving suburb, filled with a generation of people who, in large, embraced

a determined responsibility towards their community. The rhythmic groove is a determined stomp, played with momentum within the strings, while the clarinetist answers within a declarative ricochet. ShotGun Houses ends gently with a dark realization of blight that the neighborhood has experienced in the present day.

Ali's home on *Grand Avenue* titles the second movement, and the music is a simple ballad to his mother. In my research, every photo I found of Ali with his mother shows a kiss or embrace, and it is clear to see the pure love from that innocent child that remained with the champion throughout his life. The clarinet is sweet in sound here, as Ali wanted to give his mother a better life than what Grand Avenue could provide.

Rome 1960 is the final movement of the first installment, and appropriately so, as the result of the 1960 Olympics was truly the launch into Ali's professional career.

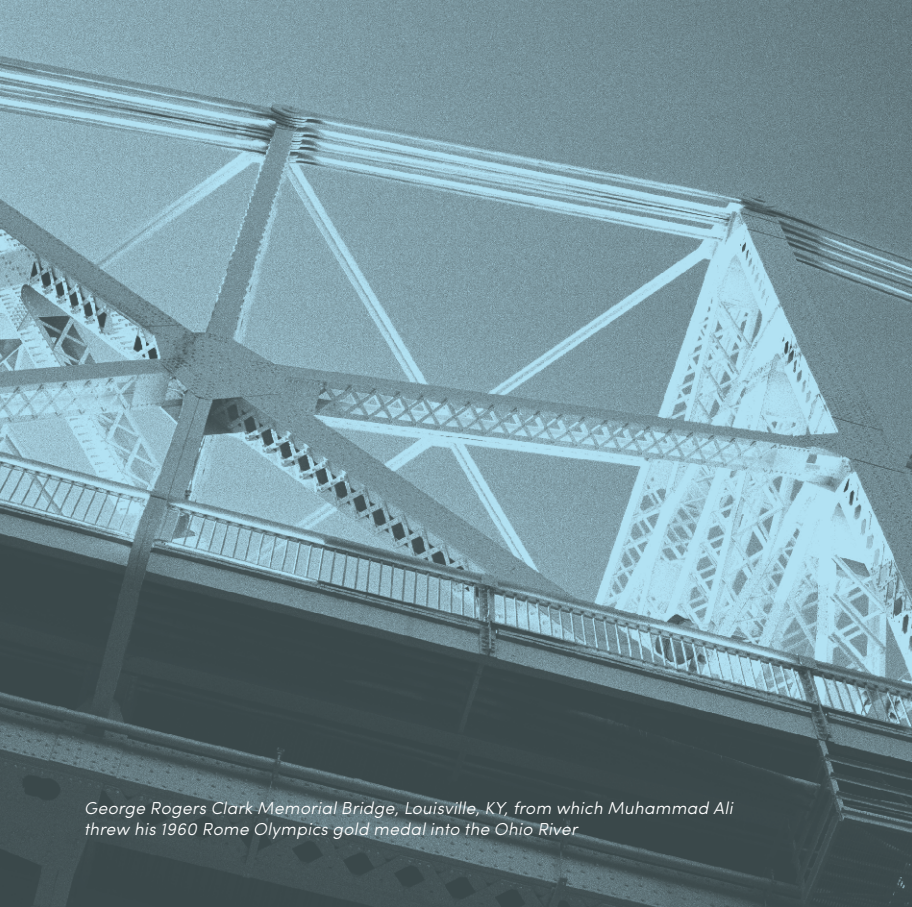
"AS THE 'BELL' RINGS
ONE FINAL TIME, A
REJUVENATED AND
DETERMINED ALI
DANCES IN THE RING
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OF THE OPENING
MATERIAL, REMINDING
THE LISTENER OF
HUMANITY'S
DETERMINATION,
MANIFESTED THROUGH
ALI'S GREATNESS."

It begins with a young Cassius Clay, Jr., training on a speed bag (the balloon-like bag that hangs upside down) as shown through the rapid repetitive rhythm between cello and viola. The music also reflects the imagery of a young Clay jogging through the West End of Louisville to start his daily training every morning before sunrise. The clarinet begins to season the rhythm with a bubbling of musical commentary to reflect Ali's own prose during workout sessions when the news cameras came to visit. The first section ends with a short cadenza, depicting Ali's first airplane flight overseas into Rome.

With the ringing of the bell (as depicted by the clarinet), what follows is a mini-musical documentary of the gold medal match between Ali and the reigning European champion, complete with hits, blows (orchestrated through a combination of string pizzicati and clarinet shrieks), and finessed defensive movements. In the first round, Zbigniew

Pietrzykowski takes the lead. In the second round, they are evenly matched; the clarinet and cello end the round in a sustained dissonance to depict two boxers in a clinching (embraced) position before being broken up by the referee and the match bell. At this point, Ali quickly reflects on what needs to be done and, within the *Meno mosso* section of sobering and slow melody, realizes that the very last round should leave no doubt that he is the Olympic champion. As the "bell" rings one final time, a rejuvenated and determined Ali dances in the ring with a recapitulation of the opening material, reminding the listener of humanity's determination, manifested through Ali's greatness.

This is a work that I dedicate to my neighborhood, Ali's neighborhood of West Louisville. May his legacy remind us of the greatness that we are all capable of achieving.



George Rogers Clark Memorial Bridge, Louisville, KY, from which Muhammad Ali threw his 1960 Rome Olympics gold medal into the Ohio River

ANTHONY MCGILL

anthonymcgill.com

Hailed for his “trademark brilliance, penetrating sound and rich character” (*New York Times*), clarinetist Anthony McGill enjoys a dynamic international solo and chamber music career and is principal clarinet of the New York Philharmonic — the first African-American principal player in the organization's history. He is the recipient of the 2020 Avery Fisher Prize, one of classical music's most significant awards given in recognition of musicians who represent the highest level of musical excellence.

McGill appears as a soloist with top orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Metropolitan Opera, and the Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, and Detroit Symphony Orchestras. He performed alongside Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, and Gabriela Montero at the first inauguration of President Barack Obama, premiering a piece by John Williams.

As a chamber musician, McGill is a collaborator of the Brentano, Daedalus, Guarneri, JACK, Miró, Pacifica, Shanghai, Takács, and Tokyo Quartets, and performs with leading artists including Emanuel Ax, Inon Barnatan, Gloria Chien, Yefim Bronfman, Gil Shaham, Midori, Mitsuko Uchida, and Lang Lang.

He is a dedicated champion of new music. In addition to his performances of works by Ms. Coleman, Mr. Danielpour,

Mr. Lee, and Mr. Shirley, his concert appearances have included works by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Anthony Davis, Daron Hagen, Adolphus Hailstork, and Jessie Montgomery.

McGill's previous albums on the Cedille label are *Mozart & Brahms Clarinet Quintets* with the Pacifica Quartet; *Portraits – Works for Flute, Clarinet & Piano* recorded with his brother, flutist Demarre McGill and pianist Michael McHale; *Winged Creatures* recorded with Demarre McGill and the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra led by Maestro Allen Tinkham, and *Here with You* with pianist Gloria Chien, which includes works by Brahms, Weber, and Montgomery. McGill's self-titled debut recording, also recorded with Chien, features early 20th century works by Gershwin, Rachmaninoff, Debussy, and Poulenc.

He serves on the faculty of The Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute of Music, where he holds the William R. and Hyunah Yu Brody Distinguished Chair. He is the Artistic Director for Juilliard's Music Advancement Program, a weekend program dedicated to students who demonstrate a commitment to artistic excellence, which actively seeks young musicians from backgrounds underrepresented in classical music. In 2020, McGill's *#TakeTwoKnees* campaign protesting the death of George Floyd and historic racial injustice went viral.

PACIFICA QUARTET

pacificaquartet.com

With a career spanning nearly three decades, the multiple Grammy Award-winning Pacifica Quartet has achieved international recognition as one of the finest chamber ensembles performing today. Known for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often-daring repertory choices, recently the Quartet received its second Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance for *Contemporary Voices* on Cedille Records (2020), an album featuring works by three Pulitzer Prize-winning women.

Formed in 1994, Pacifica quickly won chamber music's top competitions, including the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 2002 the ensemble was honored with Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award and the appointment to Lincoln Center's The Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two), and in 2006 was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. With its powerful energy and captivating, cohesive sound, the Pacifica has established itself as the embodiment of the senior American quartet sound.

The Pacifica Quartet has proven itself the preeminent interpreter of string quartet cycles, harnessing the group's singular focus and incredible stamina to portray each composer's evolution, often over the course of just a few days. Having given highly acclaimed performances of the

complete Carter cycle in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Houston; the Mendelssohn cycle in Napa, Australia, New York, and Pittsburgh; and the Beethoven cycle in New York, Denver, St. Paul, Chicago, Napa, and Tokyo; the Quartet presented the monumental Shostakovich cycle in Chicago, New York, Montreal, and London. An ardent advocate of contemporary music, the Pacifica Quartet commissions and performs many new works, including music by Keeril Makan, Julia Wolfe, Shulamit Ran, Sean Shepherd, David Dzubay, Deirdre Gribbin, and Joseph Schwantner.

In 2008, the Quartet released its Grammy Award-winning recording of Carter's quartets Nos. 1 and 5 on the Naxos label; the 2009 release of quartets Nos. 2, 3, and 4 completed the two-CD set. Cedille Records released the group's four-double-CD set recording of the entire Shostakovich cycle, paired with other contemporary Soviet works, to

rave reviews. Other recent recording projects include Leo Ornstein's rarely-heard piano quintet with Marc-André Hamelin, the Brahms piano quintet with legendary pianist Menahem Pressler, and *Mozart & Brahms Clarinet Quintets* with Anthony McGill.

The members of the Pacifica Quartet live in Bloomington, Indiana, where they serve as quartet-in-residence and full-time faculty members at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Prior to that 2012 appointment, the Quartet was on the faculty of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana from 2003 to 2012, and also served as resident performing artist at the University of Chicago for 17 years. The Quartet also currently leads the Center for Advanced Quartet Studies at the Aspen Music Festival and School.

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