

A photograph of two hands cupped together, framing a bright sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the scene with a warm, golden light. The hands are silhouetted against the bright light. The background shows a dark, textured landscape, possibly a field of tall grass or reeds, with some light reflecting off the surfaces.

ÇEDILLE

AMERICAN VOICES

PACIFICA QUARTET

UNITING VOICES

AMERICAN VOICES

PACIFICA QUARTET

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK
(1841–1904)

**String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96,
“American” (27:14)**

- 1** I. Allegro ma non troppo (9:50)
- 2** II. Lento (7:45)
- 3** III. Molto vivace (3:51)
- 4** IV. Finale: vivace ma non troppo
(5:36)

FLORENCE PRICE
(1887–1953)

String Quartet in G major (16:34)

- 5** I. Allegro (9:29)
- 6** II. Andante moderato —
Allegretto (7:02)

UNITING VOICES

LOUIS GRUENBERG
(1884–1964)

**Four Diversions for String Quartet,
Op. 32 (8:47)**

- 7** I. Allegro moderato (2:01)
- 8** II. Moderato ed à capriccio (1:54)
- 9** III. Andante moderato e delicato
(2:54)
- 10** IV. Allegro burlando (1:51)

JAMES LEE III (B. 1975)

- 11 Pitch In* (12:26)**
with Uniting Voices
Josephine Lee, conductor

TT: (65:23)

*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

PROGRAM NOTES

by Austin Hartman

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96, “American” (1893)

On May 21, 1893, beloved Bohemian composer Antonín Dvořák dropped a bombshell on contemporary American readers of the *New York Herald* when he was quoted saying:

I am now satisfied that the future music in this country [America] must be founded upon what are called Negro melodies. This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States... these beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are American. These are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them.

Dvořák did not intend these progressive ideas to be academic exercises meant to disrupt the compositional status quo, but instead to showcase his strong belief that these distinctly American folk songs needed to be the musical foundations of new compositions, thereby cementing his

status as one of the earliest champions of indigenous American folk music.

Some of Dvořák's first encounters with these new American folk elements came during an inspired three year period (1892–1895) while living in New York City and serving as director of the National Conservatory of Music. In summer 1893, he was invited to stay in the small, rural Czech community of Spillville, Iowa. Acting as an ethnomusicological sponge, he absorbed and collected colorful musical sounds from his American experiences, while masterfully incorporating many of these new findings into his compositions from this time. The result of these efforts netted two of Western music's most iconic masterpieces: his Symphony No. 9, Op. 95, “From the New World,” and String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96, “American.”

The inspiration Dvořák derived from these new American folk elements moved him to compose his “American” Quartet in a short, two-week blitz and state on completion, “Thank God! I am content. It was fast.” In this quartet, ornithologists will immediately recognize

the song of the scarlet tanager in the third movement, while train enthusiasts will identify with Dvořák's fascination with the mechanical locomotive rhythms found in the final movement. In the early movements, students of the American spiritual will recognize the rich sonority of the pentatonic scale that has traditionally provided the musical pitches for the "beautiful and varied themes" of these indigenous folk songs.

FLORENCE PRICE

String Quartet No. 1 in G Major (1929)

Since Dvořák's famous quote of 1893, composers from both the 20th and 21st centuries have echoed his affirmations on the merits of the "folks songs of America" by integrating these folk melodies and harmonies into their own compositions. Florence Price, exactly 40 years after Dvořák's time in America, would earn the impressive distinction of being the first African-American woman to have her work premiered by a major symphony orchestra when the Chicago Symphony performed her Symphony No. 1 in 1933. Inspired by Dvořák's use of thematic

American folk elements in his "New World" Symphony, Price based her first symphony on the model of his ninth by incorporating American folk harmonies throughout the work, with an American hymn tune in the slow movement and a traditional African-American Juba Dance in the third. While Price does not explicitly reference the specific folk influences on her String Quartet No. 1, one cannot listen to the two movement quartet without enjoying the honest, straight-to-the-heart compositional folk qualities that she so masterfully incorporates into many of her compositions. The origins for many of her original melodies and musical colors can be traced directly to the folk songs that she heard in her native Little Rock, Arkansas before she was forced to leave and head to Chicago in 1927 following a period of horrific, racist acts of terrorism in the American South.

LOUIS GRUENBERG

Four Diversions for String Quartet, Op. 32 (1930)

Concurrent with Dvořák's time as director of the National Conservatory in America, a burgeoning eight-year-old named Louis Gruenberg was just doors away at the same New York institution studying piano and absorbing the many musical influences he found in the city. These experiences provided much of the musical content that would later strongly influence his work as a prolific opera and orchestral composer. Gruenberg became a strong advocate for the music of Arnold Schoenberg, even though his own musical fascinations were less connected to the esoteric Second Viennese School and more to the familiar sounds and style of the American jazz idiom that evolved in the late 19th century from its origins rooted in American spirituals, hymns, blues, ragtime, vaudeville, and dance music, among others. The confluence of Gruenberg's varied musical interests contributed to his rise as a prominent three-time Academy Award-nominated film composer, with a prolific career of

nearly 30 film scores to his credit. Similar to his film-composer contemporary, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Gruenberg's chamber music expertly fuses musical ideas from his gifts as a composer of both concert music and scores for the silver screen. Composed in separate distinctive movements, the Four Diversions for String Quartet demonstrate Gruenberg's versatility as a composer in his ability to coalesce eloquently the traditional sonorities of the string quartet with the new cinematic sounds of the 1920s and 30s, producing a work of chamber music that features the quintessential style of popular music in Prohibition-era America.

**"GRUENBERG'S CHAMBER
MUSIC EXPERTLY FUSES
MUSICAL IDEAS FROM HIS
GIFTS AS A COMPOSER
OF BOTH CONCERT MUSIC
AND SCORES FOR THE
SILVER SCREEN."**

JAMES LEE III

Pitch In for String Quartet and Children's Choir

*Commissioned by the Pacifica Quartet
with text by Sylvia Dianne Beverly*

As we anticipate the collective recognition of America's 250 years, we ask ourselves and the nation at large what legacies are we leaving for our current generation, while also considering what actions we can take to inspire a positive trajectory for future generations. Through our discussions around these questions with our friend, composer James Lee III, a new social justice commissioning project emerged that Lee titled *Pitch In* and composed for our quartet with children's choir in honor of the semiquincentennial anniversary of America.

During our conversations with Lee on the compositional influences that inspired him while writing *Pitch In*, he pointed to the incorporation of American folk elements into his works, stating "when I use folk elements in my pieces, it has been mostly with major and minor pentatonic

scales. For example, in the middle section of *Pitch In*, when the string parts are a little more animated, I hinted at an E minor pentatonic scale in the voice parts as they sing 'So others might eat...'" As noted earlier, the evocative sonorities of the pentatonic scale are the scale degrees that comprise the foundations for both the American Spiritual and the slow movement of Dvořák's "American" Quartet. Lee's use evolved out of the inspiration he found in the expressive words of American poet Sylvia Dianne Beverly (aka "Ladi Di"). Her poem, *Pitch In*, from which the commission derives its name, brings attention to many of the issues surrounding global poverty and food insecurity, while challenging all of us to consider what we can do to support the welfare of others.

About *Pitch In*, Lee writes:

Pitch In is based on texts by poet Sylvia Dianne Beverly and inspired by the social justice issue of food insecurity. The Human Rights Careers website notes, "While events like war trigger food insecurity, increased hunger has been on the rise for years. The 2022

edition of The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report found that hunger affected around 828 million people in 2021, which reflects a 46 million people increase.” The work is in three contrasting, continuous sections with a melodic motivic figure on the words, “People are hungry,” frequently followed by, “yet people continue to waste food.” Throughout the work, the character of the music changes as the words fluctuate between stating the issue, hope, despair, and a call to action. The children’s choir provides moments of call-and-response in a dialog with the string quartet until the last passages of the piece, when the string quartet plays long, solemn, sustained chords. These poignant harmonies evoke moments of reflection for the listener. The pathos the music seeks to elicit is accompanied by the hope that people will do their part to combat hunger and food insecurity.

**"WHILE EVENTS
LIKE WAR TRIGGER
FOOD INSECURITY,
INCREASED
HUNGER HAS
BEEN ON THE RISE
FOR YEARS."**

PITCH IN

BY SYLVIA DIANNE
BEVERLY

"PEOPLE ARE
HUNGRY, YET
PEOPLE CONTINUE
TO WASTE FOOD."

People are hungry, yet people continue to
waste food.

Her meals were from partially eaten
sandwiches thrown in public trash
cans.

She watched a child throw away a sandwich
one bite out of it.

Getting sandwich from can immediately
would be her evening meal.

People are hungry, yet people continue to
waste food.

An apple, a pear, a peach, some cherries
Some grapes to help provide nutrition
To help curb appetite
Praying to God above, never to give up
Ferocious fight.

People are hungry, yet people continue to
waste food.

A project for many years, helping my Mother
Make sandwiches in our kitchen
with Family and Friends
Taking sandwiches to organizations, like
S.O.M.E, So Others Might Eat brings on
cheers, chants yea food is here.

People are hungry, yet people continue to
waste food.

Standing on Main Avenue in freezing cold
And snow, holding sign stating HELP ME
FEED MY CHILDREN, IF ONLY FOR ONE
NIGHT!!!

People are hungry, yet people continue to
waste food.

All across the world people die from hunger
and malnutrition to ignore this plight would
be a ridiculous selfish shame.

People are hungry, yet people continue to
waste food.

What can you do, what can I do, what can
others do, to end this international plague?
The answer is blowing in the wind, doing
Something consistent, we can all PITCH IN.

People are hungry, yet people continue to
waste food.

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PACIFICA QUARTET

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. The Quartet is known for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often-daring repertoire choices. Having served as quartet-in-residence at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music for the past decade, the Quartet also leads the Center for Advanced Quartet Studies at the Aspen Music Festival and School, and was previously the quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and University of Chicago. In 2021, the Pacifica Quartet received its second Grammy Award for Cedille's *Contemporary Voices*, an exploration of music by three Pulitzer Prize-winning composers: Shulamit Ran, Jennifer Higdon, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.

Formed in 1994, the Pacifica Quartet 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 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, Pacifica has established itself as the embodiment of the senior American quartet sound.

2023–2024 performances and recordings include projects with clarinetist Anthony McGill and guitarist Sharon Isbin. In addition, the Quartet collaborates with soprano Karen Slack for performances of James Lee III's "A Double Standard," a new song cycle commissioned by Carnegie Hall, Chamber Music Detroit, and the Shriver Hall Concert Series. Renamed the University of Chicago's Don Michael Randel Ensemble in Residence for the 2023–2024 season, the Pacifica Quartet performs and gives masterclasses at the University of Chicago throughout the



photo: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

academic year. Additional performances include ones for the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Chamber Music Detroit, Denver Friends of Chamber Music, and Caramoor.

The members of the Pacifica Quartet live in Bloomington, IN, where they serve as quartet-in-residence and full-time faculty members at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Prior to that 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.

Simin Ganatra, violin
Austin Hartman, violin
Mark Holloway, viola
Brandon Vamos, cello

pacificaquartet.com

UNITING VOICES



photo: Kyle Flubacker

Uniting Voices (formerly known as the Chicago Children's Choir) is a nonprofit organization that empowers and unites youth from diverse backgrounds to find their voice and celebrate their common humanity through the power of music.

Founded at the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement on the South side of Chicago, Uniting Voices has grown from one community-based choir into a vast network of school-based and after-school

programs that serve thousands of youth from every zip code of Chicago and beyond.

Helmed by Emmy-winner and Grammy-nominee Josephine Lee, Uniting Voices has also established itself as a renowned artistic powerhouse in its own right, opening doors to life-changing performance experiences that inspire young people to develop leadership and collaboration skills. In addition to musical productions (including original works *Sita Ram*, *Long Way Home*, and *Rainbow Beach*), Uniting Voices has worked with some of the world's most influential musicians and musical institutions, including Beyoncé, Bobby McFerrin, Karol G, the Eagles, Yo Yo Ma, Luciano Pavarotti, Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, Chance the Rapper, Common, the Q Brothers, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera, Ravinia Festival, and others. Through more than 55 years of touring, Uniting Voices has performed for leaders around the world (former

President Obama, former South African President Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama) and is celebrated for using music as a tool to transcend cultural barriers, forging meaningful bonds between young people across the nation and the globe.

With its vision of a harmonious world, Uniting Voices has impacted the lives of tens of thousands of diverse youth throughout its history. Since its founding in 1956, the organization has built programs that reflect the racial and economic diversity of Chicago. Eighty percent of the youth it serves are from low-to-moderate income households. High school seniors enrolled in its choir programs have a 100 percent graduation and college acceptance rate, and they go on to become global ambassadors who embody Uniting Voices' core values of education, expression, and excellence in a wide array of professional fields.

unitingvoiceschicago.org

Christabel Abiola-
Fagba
Ella Anello
Ryan Antoine
Sofia Bondurant
Ameer Bunkely
Rishi Chandra
Chloe Combs
Jamion Cotten
Lauren Cusick
Jack DeKoker
Tobin Ferrall
Tori Hampton
Andrea Hernandez
Theo Hinerfeld
Riley Jacobson
Mira Jain
Hana Javed
Camille Kejo
Lydia Kuhr
Eve McMillin

Isamary Medina-
Marerro
Charlotte Miller
Tori Mooney
Olivia Nach
Sydney Nelkin
Claire Nietzsche
Yohance Nowlin
Jackson O'Brien
Wyatt Parr
Abby Rades
Richard Ramirez
Myra Sahai
Samantha Schulz
Annika Sevig
Sophia Smith
Kackie Talmers
Laelia van der Bijl
Matilde Velez Lauria
Eliot Warren

JOSEPHINE LEE

An Emmy Award-winning and Grammy-nominated singer, conductor, pianist, producer, nonprofit leader, and composer, Josephine Lee has made a widespread impact in the fields of music and education through an array of engagements across the globe. Ms. Lee has worked with a sterling roster of local and international artists and currently serves as President of the United States' preeminent youth choral organization, Uniting Voices (formerly the Chicago Children's Choir).

In her role as President of Uniting Voices, Ms. Lee has revolutionized the field of youth choral music through cutting-edge performances of diverse repertoire and innovative collaborations with world-class artists. Through her vision and leadership, Ms. Lee has doubled the number of students served, tripled the organization's budget, and established Uniting Voices as one of Chicago's premier cultural institutions, solidifying partnerships with renowned arts organizations, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera

of Chicago, Ravinia Festival, and Grant Park Orchestra and directing new works that capture the pulse of contemporary life in the global age.

In recognition of her leadership of Uniting Voices, Ms. Lee received the Kennedy Center's National Committee for the Performing Arts Award for Arts Advocacy in 2018, the Roman Nomitch Fellowship in 2012 to attend the Harvard Business School's Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management program, and was awarded the Jesse L. Rosenberger Medal in 2014 from the University of Chicago. Ms. Lee was also featured in "The Transformative Power of Music," a segment on Oprah Winfrey Network's acclaimed show, *Super Soul Sunday*. Ms. Lee holds a bachelor's degree in piano performance from DePaul University and a master's in conducting from Northwestern University.

[unitingvoiceschicago.org/about-us/
our-team/faculty-and-administration/
josephine-lee](http://unitingvoiceschicago.org/about-us/our-team/faculty-and-administration/josephine-lee)

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ENGINEER Bill Maylone

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