



CE DILLE

CHILDREN'S STORIES

MICHAEL ABELS • AUGUSTA READ THOMAS
ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA • STILIAN KIROV

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MICHAEL ABELS (b. 1962) FREDERICK'S FABLES (38:16)

Leo Lionni, author
Michael Sumuel, narrator

- 1 Frederick (8:06)
- 2 The Greentail Mouse (9:06)
- 3 Theodore and the Talking Mushroom (8:53)
- 4 Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse (12:06)

COVER

Faith Ringgold, Cover of *Bronzeville Boys and Girls* (detail), by Gwendolyn Brooks, Illustrated by Faith Ringgold

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AUGUSTA READ THOMAS (b. 1964) GWENDOLYN BROOKS SETTINGS (31:06)

with Anima — Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus
and ChiArts Chamber Choir

- 5 Part 1 — Live in the along (5:12)
- 6 Part 2 — Poetry is life distilled (4:36)
- 7 Part 3 — I'd keep you with me always (4:05)
- 8 Part 4 — We are each other's magnitude and bond (6:00)
- 9 Part 5 — That clock is ticking me away! (5:41)
- 10 Part 6 — Shine Star Shine! (5:29)

TT: (69:33)

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Children's Stories is made possible by the generous support of the Walder Foundation, Andrea and Richard Gibb, Jerri E. Greer and Michael W. Rogers, the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Aaron Copland Fund for Music

FREDERICK'S FABLES

BY MICHAEL ABELS

Frederick's Fables is the name of a collection of the most beloved children's stories by renowned Caldecott Award-winning children's author/illustrator Leo Lionni. The piece for narrator and orchestra was commissioned by the Plymouth Music Series of Minnesota (now Vocalessence) and its Artistic Director, Philip Brunelle. Brunelle had decided to approach legendary actor James Earl Jones to appear as a guest narrator at a concert. "What would you like to narrate?" Brunelle asked. Jones, whose voice had become synonymous with solemn, serious characters, said, "What I'd like to read are some children's stories." And so I was drawn to these stories by Lionni, which are rich with wisdom, charm, and musical possibilities.

In print, Lionni's stories include his colorful illustrations, which definitely provided inspiration for the musical interludes. But much of this piece is written like the score

to an unseen animated film — meaning that the music and the narration are often closely interwoven so that the story unfolds in both simultaneously. This approach makes the piece a great example for young listeners to hear how music depicts actions and emotions, and how effective music is at creating images in our imaginations.

Fables are stories that carry a lesson, or a deeper meaning. "Frederick" is a story about the importance of the arts in a society. "The Greentail Mouse" is a cautionary tale about overindulgence, or about the cost of losing sight of what's truly important. "Theodore and the Talking Mushroom" is about the cost of lying to impress people. And "Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse" is about what someone is willing to do for a friend. I hope they bring your young people the same joy they brought to me when I set them to music.

GWENDOLYN BROOKS SETTINGS

BY AUGUSTA READ THOMAS

Music for me is an embrace of the world, a way to open myself to being alive in the world — in my body, in my sounds, and in my mind. I care deeply about musicality, imagination, craft, clarity, dimensionality, an elegant balance between material and form, and empathy with the performing musicians as well as everyone who works in the presenting organizations.

Gwendolyn Brooks Settings was composed between 2018 and 2020. Collaborating with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, Stilian Kirov, conductor; Anima — Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus, Evan Bruno, artistic director, and William Buhr, accompanist; and The Chicago High School for the Arts, Charles Taylor, music director, and Andrew Lawrence, accompanist, has been an exhilarating experience. I am grateful to the many extraordinary colleagues who have made this partnership possible. The magnificence and energy of massed vocal

and orchestral resources is humbling, inspiring, and exemplifies teamwork.

I am deeply thankful to Cedille Records: James Ginsburg, president; Bill Maylone recording engineer; and the whole Cedille Records team for recording *Gwendolyn Brooks Settings* for wide release.

In 2018, Dr. Charles Sundquist, the former artistic director of Anima — Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus, generously proposed to me the idea of making a large-scale composition for chorus and orchestra that would set texts from Gwendolyn Brooks' famous book, *Bronzeville Boys and Girls*.

Gwendolyn Brooks is a legendary literary icon. I love her work and was (and remain) thrilled by this opportunity to compose *Gwendolyn Brooks Settings*. By consent of Brooks Permissions, I was given formal permission to set and reprint Brooks' inspiring words.

Across the 30-minute composition — formed in six parts performed without a pause, each lasting circa five minutes — the music, singers, and instrumental musicians paint sonic images of the texts' deeper meanings. Each part, sub-section, and musical arc captures the aura of Brooks' words.

Organic and, at every level, concerned with transformations and connections, the carefully sculpted, fashioned, and notated musical materials are agile and spirited. Their flexibility allows pathways to braid harmonic, rhythmic, timbral, and contrapuntal elements that are constantly transformed. The music traverses sound worlds that are energized, balletic, colorful, vibrant, reflective, playful, majestic, intimate, lyrical, layered, and overtly reverberating with cantabile, melodic resonance, pirouettes, and fulcrum points.

Music's eternal quality is its capacity for change, transformation, and renewal. No one composer, musical style, school of thought, technical practice, or historical period can claim a monopoly on music's truths. I believe music feeds our souls.

Unbreakable is the power of art to build community. Humanity has worked, and will always work, together to further music's flexible, diverse capacity and innate power.

Gwendolyn Brooks Settings was co-commissioned by Anima — Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus and the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra with partial support from Illinois Arts Council Agency and Illinois Humanities.



BRONZEVILLE BOYS AND GIRLS

TEXT BY GWENDOLYN BROOKS

I shall create!¹

Each body has its art.²

TOMMY

I put a seed into the ground
And said, "I'll watch it grow."

I watered it and cared for it
As well as I could know.

One day I walked in my
back yard,

And oh, what did I see!

My seed had popped itself
right out,

Without consulting me.

Live in the along.³

To be in love

Is to touch things with a
lighter hand.⁴

CYNTHIA IN THE SNOW

It SUSHES.

It hushes

The loudness in the road.

It flutter-twitters,

And laughs away from me.

It laughs a lovely whiteness,

And whitely whirs away,

To be

Some otherwhere,

Still white as milk or shirts.

So beautiful it hurts.

If you wanted a poem you only need to look out of a window.⁵

Poetry is life distilled.⁶

If you wanted a poem you only need to look out of a window. *Reprise*⁷

Live in the along. *Reprise*

Your sky may burn with light,

While mine,

Spreads beautiful to darkness.⁸





ROBERT, WHO IS OFTEN A STRANGER TO HIMSELF

Do you ever look in the looking-glass

And see a stranger there?

A child you know and do not know,

Wearing what you wear?

Exhaust the little moment.

Soon it dies.

And be it gash or gold it will not come

Again⁹

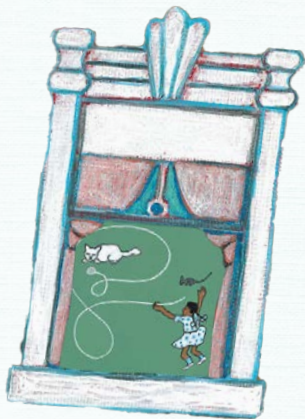
FROM DE KOVEN

I'd keep you with me always.

You'd shine both night and day.

MEXIE AND BRIDIE

A tiny tea-party
Is happening today.
Pink cakes, and nuts and bon-bons on
A tiny, shiny tray.
It's out within the weather,
Beneath the clouds and sun.
And pausing ants have peeked upon,
As birds and God have done.
Mexie's in her white dress,
And Bridie's in her brown.
There are no finer Ladies
Tea-ing in the town.
Live in the along. *Reprise*
We are each other's magnitude
and bond.¹⁰



FROM DE KOVEN

Ah
night and day

MARIE LUCILLE

That clock is ticking
Me away!
The me that only
Yesterday
Ate peanuts, jam and
Licorice
Is gone already.
And this is
'Cause nothing's putting
Back, each day,
The me that clock is
Ticking away.

THE ADMIRATION OF WILLIE

Grown folks are wise
About tying ties
And baking cakes
And chasing aches,
Building walls
And finding balls
And making planes
And cars and trains —
And kissing children into bed
After their prayers are said.

FROM DE KOVEN

Ah
Shine Star Shine!



**REPRINTED BY CONSENT
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- ¹ Boy Breaking Glass
- ² Quote
- ³ Report From Part One
- ⁴ To Be In Love
- ⁵ *The Essential Gwendolyn Brooks*
- ⁶ *Poetry Is Life Distilled*, biography of Gwendolyn Brooks by Christine M. Hill
- ⁷ Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress-Toward (Among them Nora and Henry III)
- ⁸ Corners on the Curving Sky
- ⁹ Annie Allen
- ¹⁰ Published in *Family Pictures* (1971)

ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) is a leading performing arts organization in Chicago's Southland and the region's only professional orchestra. IPO's repertoire champions symphonic music in all its forms — from the baroque and classical canon to 21st-century masterpieces and cross-genre musical experiences. The Illinois Council of Orchestras named IPO "Illinois Professional Orchestra of the Year" in 2020, 2010, and 1991, recognizing IPO's overall artistic excellence.

IPO's history dates back to 1954. Then known as the Park Forest Symphony, it was formed at the community level with volunteer musicians. In 1978, the orchestra was re-formed into a professional chamber orchestra performing in Park Forest. In 1982, the orchestra was renamed to reflect its regional mission. Instrumental to IPO's growing success was the naming of Carmon DeLeone as Music Director in 1986. During DeLeone's 25-year tenure, the IPO expanded its Artists-in-the-

Schools Education Program to include interactive Youth Concerts. In the 1990s, IPO performed in residence at the Center for the Performing Arts at Governors State University in University Park. In 2008, the orchestra began a new residency at the Lincoln-Way North Performing Arts Center in Frankfort; and in 2017, the orchestra relocated its mainstage concert season to Ozinga Chapel at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, IL. Maestro DeLeone became Conductor Laureate in 2011. After an international search process, IPO appointed David Danzmayr as Music Director, serving from 2012–2016, and expanded IPO's programming to include an American work on every program. In 2017, following a search that attracted over 170 applicants from around the world, IPO announced the hiring of Stilian Kirov as Music Director beginning with its 40th Anniversary Season. Kirov has expanded IPO's repertoire and developed *Classical Evolve*, the company's first Composer-in-Residence Competition.

Children's Stories would not be possible without the unwavering support and assistance provided by a myriad of individuals. Special thanks to IPO's Board of Directors and Life and Honorary Directors for championing this project from start to finish. Additional thanks to the IPO staff, including Trish Halpin, Ken Churilla, Catharine Walby, Lindsay Fredrickson, and Dr. Roosevelt Griffin, for keeping us on course.

Christina Salerno
Executive Director

Brian Ostrega
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Savanna Cardenas & Ashley Ertz
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ipomusic.org

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Jeanne and Donnell
Schwarz

Margaret and Richard
Skurka

Christina Salerno and
Ross Sweeney

Lynn and Bruce Werth
Cynthia and John
Westerman



ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

Azusa Tashiro
concertmaster

Elizabeth Huffman
assistant concertmaster

Carol Yampolsky*

Stephane Collopy

Brian Ostrega

Roy Meyer*

Christine Chon*

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Paul Zafer*

Elizabeth Choi**

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Ebedit Fonseca**

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Lisa Fako**

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Kamen Vatchev
assistant principal

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Caroline Slack*

Kate Lano**

Linda Lager

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Sally Stephenson*

Karen Nelson*

Carmen Abelson**

Munire Mierxiati**

Nicolas Orbovich**

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*assistant principal***

Oana Tatu
*principal***
*assistant principal**

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Becky Coffman*

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Lisa Bressler
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Wei Denton-Liu
*assistant principal***

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Ingrid Krizan

Kerena Fox*

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Nazer Dzhurnyn**

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Michael Meehan
*assistant principal**

Nicholas DeLaurentis
*principal***

Phillip Serna
*assistant principal***

Adam Attard*

Jacque Harper*

Alison Gaines**

Victor Stahoviak**

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Cynthia Fudala
principal

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Frisch
*principal**
Jennet Ingle
*principal***

OBOE/ENGLISH HORN

Christine Janzow
Phillips

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*principal**
Barbara Drapcho
*principal***

CLARINET/BASS

CLARINET
William Olsen

BASSOON

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principal
Matthew Hogan*

**HORN**

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principal
Brian Goodwin*
Elizabeth
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principal
Greg Fudala

TROMBONE

Serdar Cizmeci
*principal**
Thomas Stark
*principal***

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Andrew Rózsa

TIMPANI

Savanna Cardenas*

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Andrew Cierny
*principal***
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Gallego**
Andrew Cierny*
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HARP

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Eleanor Kirk**

VOCALS

Megan Elizabeth Cook**
Caroline Fortin**
Joelle Kross**

* *Frederick's Fables*
only

** *Gwendolyn Brooks*
Settings only





STILIAN KIROV

Stilian Kirov became the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra's (IPO) Gibb Music Director for the orchestra's 2017–2018 Season. He is a First Prize Winner of the “Debut Berlin” Concert Competition and a prizewinner at Denmark's 2015 Malko Competition and the 2010 Mitropoulos Competition. Kirov has received numerous Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Awards (2016–2019) and debuted at the Berlin Philharmonie in 2017. A former Music Director of New Jersey's Symphony in C (2015–2020), Kirov became Music Director of the Bakersfield Symphony in 2015. For the 2024–2025 Season, Kirov has assumed the role of Interim Artistic Advisor for the Southwest Florida Symphony.

Highlights of Kirov's guest performances include appearances worldwide with the Seattle Symphony, Israel Camerata, Xi'an Symphony, Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra, Sofia Philharmonic, Leopold Chamber Orchestra/Ukraine, Orchestra of Colors/Athens, Orchestre Colonne/Paris, Sofia Festival Orchestra, State Hermitage Orchestra/St. Petersburg, Thüringen Philharmonic Orchestra, Zagreb Philharmonic, Musical Olympus International Festival in St. Petersburg, Victoria Symphony/British Columbia, Omaha Symphony, and Memphis Symphony, among others.

Stilian Kirov has assisted many distinguished conductors including Bernard Haitink with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Stéphane Denève, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Christoph von Dohnányi, and Sir Andrew Davis.

Kirov is a graduate of The Juilliard School's orchestral conducting program, where he was a student of James DePreist. He also studied with Kurt Masur, Michael

Tilson Thomas, Gianluigi Gelmetti, George Manahan, Robert Spano, and Asher Fisch, among others.

Also a gifted pianist, Stilian Kirov was Gold Medalist of the 2001 Claude Kahn International Piano Competition in Paris.

stiliankirov.com

MICHAEL SUMUEL

Lauded for “vocals that are smooth and ingratiating” (*Daily Camera*), American bass-baritone Michael Sumuel has sung major roles at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Dallas Opera, Seattle Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Central City Opera, Detroit Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera San Antonio, Chicago Opera Theater, and the Glyndebourne Festival. A busy concert artist, Mr. Sumuel has concertized with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics; the Cleveland Orchestra and Chicago’s Grant Park Orchestra; the Symphonies of San Francisco, Baltimore, Seattle,

Cincinnati, Phoenix, New Jersey, San Diego, North Carolina, and Washington’s National Symphony; Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw; Québec’s Les Violons du Roy; Chicago’s Music of the Baroque; New York’s Orchestra of St. Luke’s; and Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society.

Mr. Sumuel is a Richard Tucker Career Grant awardee, Metropolitan Opera National Council audition Grand Finalist, and a winner of the Dallas Opera Guild Vocal Competition. A Texas native, he is an alumnus of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera, and the Filene Young Artist program at Wolf Trap Opera.

imgartists.com/roster/michael-sumuel



ANIMA – GLEN ELLYN CHILDREN'S CHORUS

The Glen Ellyn Theater Chorus was founded by Barbara Born in 1964 to celebrate and showcase the voices of young local singers. It quickly grew to include singers from throughout greater Chicagoland and rose to acclaim performing with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and touring around the country and eventually the world.

Almost 60 years later, Anima – Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus is world renowned. Its rich heritage of artistic and educational excellence has been recognized by Chorus America, American Composers Forum, and the National Endowment for the Arts, among other awards. Anima frequently performs with area professional music organizations, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, and Grant Park Music Festival.

As the options for extra-curricular activities continue to increase, Anima's programming is evolving to meet a range of personal aspirations and give all young people the opportunity to grow their vocal ability.

Evan Bruno
Artistic Director

Phoebe Cochrane

Simran Goel

Abi Goldsborough

Gretchen
Goldsborough

Maddie
Goldsborough

Andrew Hill

Leah Kreller

Lark Lopez

Ellie Lovely

Cameron Mendez

Jayden Morales

Madeleine Nephew

Sage Nephew

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Jamie Whitall

Riven Wisniewski

Allie Zier

anima-singers.org

CHIARTS CHAMBER CHOIR

The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts®) develops the next generation of diverse, artistically promising scholar-artists through intensive pre-professional training in the arts, combined with a comprehensive college preparatory curriculum.

The ChiArts Chamber Choir is the advanced choral ensemble at The Chicago High School for the Arts and is one of the leading high school vocal ensembles in Illinois. The group performs a wide variety of repertoire from classical to contemporary styles. The ensemble has performed for First Lady Michelle Obama, for the Millennium Park Sing-A-Long at the Bean, and was part of the American Choral Directors Association sponsored by “Join Voices” Festival, hosted by Northeastern Illinois University. The vocalists in this ensemble have been chosen for numerous ILMEA (Illinois Music Education Association) District 1 Festivals as well as IMEC (Illinois Music Education Conference) Festivals.

Charles Taylor
Director

Noelia DiMario

Tiriniti Cole

Kristin Payne

Flynn Ramirez

Kyndall Morris

Tamyrah Veal

Caitlin Burns

Kaya Bustamante

Norma Ramos

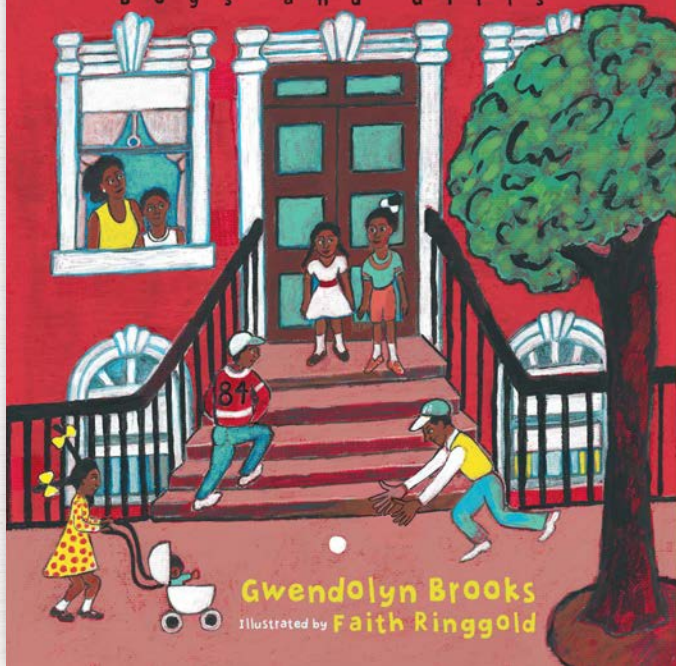
Montiara Davis

Amajen Anzaldúa

chiarts.org

BRONZEVILLE

Boys and Girls



Gwendolyn Brooks
Illustrated by Faith Ringgold



"... [these poems] are universal and will
make friends anywhere, among grown-ups,
or among children..."

—New York Herald-Tribune



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