

# SONGS IN FLIGHT

SHAWN E OKPEBHOLO

Rhiannon Giddens • Karen Slack • Paul Sánchez  
Will Liverman • Reginald Mobley • Julian Velasco



**CEDILLE**

# SONGS IN FLIGHT

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**SHAWN E OKPEBHOLO (b. 1981)**

*Songs in Flight* (43:11)

- 1 Prologue: Oh Freedom** • a *spiritual* (4:16)  
Rhiannon Giddens, Paul Sánchez
- 2 In Flight** • a *quiet song* (6:29)  
Karen Slack, Will Liverman, Paul Sánchez
- 3 Asko or Glasgow** • a *chaconne* (2:53)  
Reginald Mobley, Karen Slack, Will Liverman, Paul Sánchez
- 4 Peter** • a *work song* (1:28)  
Will Liverman, Paul Sánchez
- 5 Mud Song** • a *folk song* (4:02)  
Rhiannon Giddens, Will Liverman, Paul Sánchez
- 6 Jack (and Paul)** • a *field holler* (2:08)  
Reginald Mobley, Will Liverman, Karen Slack, Paul Sánchez
- 7 Mariah Francis** • a *waltz* (3:33)  
Karen Slack, Reginald Mobley, Paul Sánchez
- 8 Matilda's Tom** • an *anthem* (1:11)  
Karen Slack, Will Liverman
- 9 I Go by Robert** • a *protest song/reprise* (3:29)  
Reginald Mobley, Karen Slack, Will Liverman, Paul Sánchez

- 10 Ahmaud** • an *elegiac lullaby* (5:04)  
Rhiannon Giddens, Paul Sánchez
- 11 Four Martins** • a *dirge* (4:56)  
Karen Slack, Reginald Mobley, Will Liverman, Paul Sánchez
- 12 Jubilee: Thomas Rutling (1854? – 1915)** •  
a *lament/quasi reprise* (5:35)  
Will Liverman, Paul Sánchez

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- 13 An Echo, an Ending** (from *Unknown*) (5:33)  
Rhiannon Giddens, Julian Velasco, Paul Sánchez
  - 14 Time** (from *Three Psalmic Meditations*) (5:41)  
Reginald Mobley, Julian Velasco, Paul Sánchez
  - 15 Sing, O Black Mother** (from *Words Like Freedom*) (1:31)  
Will Liverman, Paul Sánchez
  - 16 I'm Sure** (from *Four Songs on Love*) (5:20)  
Karen Slack, Paul Sánchez

TT: {63:43}

ALL WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

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# PERSONAL NOTE

BY SHAWN E OKPEBHOLO

**IN 2021, I RECEIVED A CALL FROM MARTHA GUTH**, celebrated soprano and co-director of Sparks & Wiry Cries. She spoke passionately about the *Freedom on the Move* database, an archive of over 30,000 advertisements for runaway enslaved individuals. Having experienced one of my previous compositions, Martha proposed an ambitious project: an expansive song cycle that would breathe life into these dehumanizing records. The project would include performances at prominent venues and collaborations with world-renowned musicians Rhiannon Giddens, Will Liverman, Reginald Mobley, Karen Slack, and Howard Watkins, alongside lead curator and poet Tsitsi Ella Jaji.

Initially, the weight of the subject matter gave me pause. Having recently completed a challenging work focused on Black suffering, I questioned my capacity to undertake another emotionally demanding project, especially as a composer who invests deeply in the stories I tell. That night, however, I immersed myself in the *Freedom on the Move* archive. The ads, designed solely to recapture self-liberated individuals, described their physical features, clothing, and mannerisms in chilling detail — yet inadvertently revealed fragments of their

stories, offering a glimpse into their humanity. I felt an undeniable pull to reaffirm the dignity and personhood of these lives, whose stories persist in fragments. I said yes and would spend the next year composing *Songs in Flight*, alongside extraordinary collaborators, including multiple Pulitzer Prize- and Grammy-winning and -nominated artists whose artistry and dedication infused the work with incredible depth.

Witnessing the impact of this work on audiences nationwide has been profoundly moving. Now, with this album release, the reach of these narratives will extend even further. The album includes *Songs in Flight* alongside four additional art songs — one from each of my other song cycles — building upon the themes and messages of the project. The album cover juxtaposes an archival image of a self-emancipated individual with a photo of myself, both figures in motion, with me following. This imagery suggests an ongoing journey toward freedom that remains unfinished. My shadow looms, symbolic of the self-liberated who hid among the shadows, and the enduring shadow of slavery — a reminder that, while unshackled, its trauma lingers. The



"THE CYCLE CONNECTS  
 PAST AND PRESENT,  
 WITH REFERENCES TO  
 TRAYVON MARTIN AND  
 AHMAUD ARBERY,  
 TRACING AN UNBROKEN  
 LINE FROM HISTORICAL  
 ATROCITIES TO TODAY'S  
 RACIAL VIOLENCE. YET,  
 WOVEN THROUGHOUT,  
 THERE ARE GLIMPSSES  
 OF HOPE."

**\$500 REWARD.**



Ranaway from the subscriber the 18th of March last, a negro male named **ARIAH**, aged from 28 to 30 years, or 5 inches in height, heavy made, large mouth, and in the habit of laughing to. She speaks French a little, and is afflicted with the small pox. She will probably sell herself off as a hair dresser, or as a boy, and frequently dressed herself in boy's clothes, and cut her hair short for the purpose. She will give information to whom she belongs. The above reward for information and sufficient evidence for the apprehension of a person who is now harboring said Mariah will be paid for her if in any jail or ten dollars out of it. Apply to

a26-78-4t\*

H. F. No. 55 Tchapi

**\$40 Rew**



**RANAWAY** from the subscriber, since the 1st of June last, a negro male named **DA**, about 20 years old, 5 feet 6 inches high, dark complexion, large holes in her ears for rings, and a very bumpy face—their clothes cannot be traced, as they took away all their names, and none particularly recollected. They will endeavour to get to Pensacola, either by land or water, and if they presume they will try to imitate themselves as free negroes, to some day the fellow can read print, & I have good reason to believe he can write. The above reward will be paid, if taken and secured in any jail so I get them out of the county, if taken within this county.

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# PROGRAM NOTE

BY TSITSI ELLA JAJI

**HOW WILL WE FORMAT HISTORY?** *Songs in Flight* ponders this question by imagining the voices of people who dared to liberate themselves by running away from their enslavers in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The song cycle draws upon *Freedom on the Move*, a Cornell University-archived database of over 30,000 newspaper advertisements assembled by a team of university historians. In these macabre lost and found ads, enslavers would offer a reward for the recapture of persons who had fled captivity in pursuit of liberty. Jail wardens who apprehended escapees also summoned enslavers to reclaim the people they considered property. *Freedom on the Move* presents these instruments of systematic cruelty designed to control the movement of enslaved people as miniature portraits of people who had no other way to enter the historical record. The advertisements are brief but detailed descriptions of the personality, appearance, and life story of individuals who found the wherewithal to emancipate themselves for however long they could evade recapture. Taken collectively, the ads constitute a detailed, concise, and rare source of information about the experiences of enslaved people.

For centuries, Black people were bought and sold like wagon wheels. The statistics of the transatlantic slave trade are staggering: 12 million people left the coast of Africa in chains, of whom an estimated two million perished in the Atlantic Ocean. But in a world where we are constantly barraged by data, media, and content, it is all too easy to hurry past history, and to miss the ways in which, as William Faulkner wrote, the “past is never dead. It’s not even past.”

*Songs in Flight* makes us listen to history with more care. Art song is an intimate form, and the extraordinary singers on this album bare emotion in performances that display the human voice’s capacity to bear the color and grain of interior worlds to contemporary audiences, a true musical offering. The 12 songs that make up the song cycle begin with Okpebholo’s fearless setting of the spiritual “O, Freedom,” first heard on Okpebholo’s 2015 album of spirituals, *Steal Away*. Here, it is Rhiannon Giddens who performs, ushering us into a place of somber reflection as she sings in the richly-textured nether end of her range, while Paul Sánchez trudges through the depths of a dark, muddy, piano ostinato that refuses sentimentality. The sound seems to say that

the true meaning of hope lies in the capacity to strive toward the end of suffering, even when there is no sign of a brighter horizon ahead.

In the second song, Karen Slack's "In Flight," we hear how the perspective of a lyricist charged with writing about slavery speaks to the dilemma artists confront when facing the long and shameful enterprise that made modernity possible. The song evokes the first search poet Tsitsi Ella Jaji made in the *Freedom on the Move* database. Having entered a single parameter, "female," the poet finds Phebe, a young woman described in remarkable detail. The smudged scan of old newsprint displays how enslavers knew very well that the people considered "chattel" property lead complex interior lives. The advertisement alludes to how Phebe preferred to wear her hair, the particular care she took over her dress, and facial scars — perhaps from acne, perhaps from the searing burn of a branding iron. As with the entire cycle, this song grapples with how choosing from thousands of advertisements echoes with the act of selecting people to purchase in the slave markets from Rhode Island to Georgia (and beyond). Mitigating the risk of sentimentalizing these stories, Okpebholo ensures that the brutal data in the advertisements remains present by setting their full text, whether as narrations, solos, or ensembles, to punctuate the cycle.

The clearest portraits of fugitives come in Crystal Simone Smith's four poems, which draw out the most essential details of the



**RUN AWAY.**  
On the 7th inst., PHEBE, a black girl, about 23 years old, of rather over middling height, long hair, put up with Combs, a scar on one cheek, a genteel looking servant, and usually dresses neatly. Phebe formerly belonged to the estate of Mrs. Bonnotheau, deceased. She is harboured somewhere in the city. A reasonable reward will be paid for her apprehension. Apply at this office.  
Oct 17

advertisements. Each is a sequence of haiku — an ancient Japanese form that makes a virtue out of sparseness. Consider the song of Asko, or maybe Glasgow, or something like that. Echoing oppression in our contemporary moment, the advertiser can't be bothered to "say his name." Smith's artistry melds beautifully with Okpebholo's. The lyric "back marked by the whip's lick" conveys how quotidian the violence of slavery was — scars simply a descriptor — and his scoring for countertenor Reginald Mobley evokes the vocal register of a little boy — age ten, barely four feet tall. Reasoning from the historic descriptor of "yellow" skin that Peter may have suffered perpetual sunburn, she adds an imaginative leap: his denunciation of an enslaver who, like so many, justified the system with scripture. What drives each person to risk unspeakable punishment if recaptured? What could a Jack or Paul hear through their jail windows? What depravities could a Mariah Frances suffer, trapped in close quarters with a man who would face no consequences for serial assault? The economy of words in haiku grants privacy to individuals who had no autonomy over their own bodies, except as exerted when they ran away.

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Okpebholo's beautiful neo-folk tune, "Mud Song" and breathless duet, "Matilda's Tom" move through the wetlands where fugitives eluded tracking dogs. "Mud Song" evokes the parallel indigenous American and African knowledge systems, with a refrain drawn from the Akan proverb about a crocodile's adaptability, recalling how maroons and Native Americans navigated marshlands. Mobley's virtuosic melismas bring the best of gospel and Motown into the room with the jaunty insistence of a man, referenced in an ad as "Bob," that he goes "by Robert." Jaji's other two lyrics in *Songs in Flight* are dedicated to the families of Ahmaud Arbery and Trayvon Martin. Throughout the *Freedom on the Move* database, names and places offer a sobering reminder that liberation remains ongoing. An advertisement placed by a Zimmerman in the database triggers memories of the 2015 death of Trayvon Martin, while Shadrack McMichael's ad was published not far from the Georgia county where two other McMichaels gunned down jogger Ahmaud Arbery in 2020. For Black people, running outdoors has always been fraught. Giddens sings "Ahmaud" with the devastating tenderness of a mother's love, while Okpebholo's quotation from the spiritual "Deep River" is a testimony to how these songs have sustained generations of Black Americans. "Four Martins," the most intense piece on the album, really goes there. The name Martin appears across the database as a first name, a surname, and even an alias. In an ensemble piece, Okpebholo interweaves four different advertisements that allude to

what each Martin was wearing, carrying, or following. As with many advertisements, one notes that the fugitive is suspected of fleeing in search of a parent. The pain of such history recurring is hammered out in the unflinching repetition of a vocal cluster chord indicting the justice system that let George Zimmerman go "scot-free" after killing Trayvon Martin. Mercifully, the song cycle does not end there, but in a lyrical setting of Pulitzer Prize-winner Tyehimba Jess's poem about one of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers, Thomas Rutling. In his performance, Will Liverman leaves us floating at the exquisite apex of his range as Rutling clings to the strength his mother taught him in the spiritual "Swing Low," her last gift as they were forced apart.

Complementing *Songs in Flight*, the album introduces us to four more Okpebholo song cycles with a selection from each. As a man of deep faith, he breathes life into poems by his frequent collaborator, Marcus Amaker; a former teacher, Beatrice Holz; Langston Hughes; and scripture. These songs evoke war, time, strength, and love to meditate on the moral and biological frailty of humankind. May these songs soar as a monument to those who sacrificed so much in pursuing freedom, and as a clarion call for us to join that cloud of witnesses.

*Tsitsi Ella Jaji is the author of the poetry collections Mother Tongues and Beating the Graves, and Africa in Stereo: Music, Modernism and Pan-African Solidarity.*

**\$50 REWARD**—Will be given for negro man named STEPHEN, who broke Jail in Sampson county, N. C., on the night of the 29th ultimo. The said negro STEPHEN is about 5 feet 10 or 11 inches high, dark complected, slender built, and about 29 years of age. He passed for a free negro while in Newbern Jail, and called himself when taken, and afterwards, JOEL SIMMONS. He is vory intelligent, and writes a fair hand.



The above reward of Fifty Dollars will be given to any person who will apprehend said Stephen and confine him in any Jail so that I can get him again.

All masters of vessels, and other persons, are particularly cautioned not to conceal or harboring said negro, under the penalty and rigor of the law. The said negro Stephen will probably try to pass for a free man, and will, if possible, make his way to some one of the non-slaveholding States.

ELIAS F. SHAW.

January 11, 1850.

17-4t

Newbern Republican, Goldsboro' Patriot, and Fayetteville North Carolinian, will please give the above four insertions in their respective papers, and forward their bills to Spring Vale, Sampson county, N. C.

E. F. S.

**FRESH DRUGS, MEDICINES, &c.**

**Five Pounds Reward**



**R**AN away from the subscriber about a week ago, a negro fellow, named JOSH; about five feet eight or nine inches high, rather of a yellow with complexion, well set and strong built. He was for-

ly the property of Francis Lowthorp, Esq. and has lately been outlawed. The above reward will be paid to any person who will secure him so that I get him again, or to any person that may kill him in case he suffers not himself to be apprehended

Levi Fulsher.

N. B. ALL persons are forewarned from harboring, or employing him and vessels from carrying him away.

**"THE PAST IS NEVER DEAD. IT'S NOT EVEN PAST."**

—WILLIAM FAULKNER



## SHAWN E OKPEBHOLLO

**NIGERIAN-AMERICAN COMPOSER SHAWN E OKPEBHOLLO** is a celebrated figure in contemporary classical music. Named the *Chicago Tribune's* 2024 Chicagoan of the Year in Classical Music and one of *Musical America's* Top 30 Professionals of 2023, Okpebholo's work has earned widespread acclaim. His Grammy-nominated album, *Lord, How Come Me Here?*, reimagines Negro spirituals and American folk hymns and songs. Other accolades include awards from the Academy of Arts and Letters and The American Prize in Composition, along with grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Chamber Music America, the Barlow Endowment for the Arts, and the Mellon Foundation.

Critics describe Okpebholo's compositions as "devastatingly beautiful" and "fresh and new and fearless" (*Washington Post*), "lyrical, complex, singular" (*The Guardian*), and "powerful" (*BBC Music Magazine*). His commissioned works span leading arts organizations, festivals, and ensembles, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, Oakland Symphony, United States Air Force Strings, American Composers Orchestra, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Sphinx, and the Tanglewood, Ravinia, and Newport Classical music festivals.

Okpebholo's music resonates internationally, with performances at iconic venues including Carnegie and Wigmore Halls, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and the Lincoln, Kennedy, and Kimmel Centers. His music is brought to life by many highly acclaimed artists and ensembles, including Rhiannon Giddens, Will Liverman, Eighth Blackbird, the Copland House Ensemble, and the Cincinnati and Houston Symphonies, as well as opera companies in Chicago, Nashville, New Orleans, St. Louis, and Portland.

His music has also gained significant media attention and has been featured on PBS *NewsHour* and NPR's *Tiny Desk and Morning Edition*. In 2021, NPR included his art song, "The Rain," among the 100 Best Songs of the Year, a rare nod to classical music on the list. Okpebholo's works are featured on SiriusXM's "Living American" series on the Symphony Hall Channel, and he has contributed to 12 commercially released albums, with three earning Grammy nominations.

Okpebholo holds master's and doctoral degrees in composition from the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. He is currently the Jonathan Blanchard Distinguished Professor of Composition at Wheaton College and recently completed residencies as the Saykaly Garbulinska Composer-in-Residence with the Lexington Philharmonic and with Chicago Opera Theater.

[shawnokpebholo.com](http://shawnokpebholo.com)



## RHIANNON GIDDENS

**RHIANNON GIDDENS HAS MADE A SINGULAR, ICONIC CAREER** out of stretching her brand of folk music, with its miles-deep historical roots and contemporary sensibilities, into just about every field imaginable. A two-time Grammy Award-winning singer and multi-instrumentalist, MacArthur “Genius” grant recipient, Pulitzer Prize winner, and composer of opera, ballet, and film, Giddens has centered her work around the mission of lifting up people whose contributions to American musical history have previously been overlooked or erased, and advocating for a more accurate understanding of the country’s musical origins through art.

Giddens has released three albums under her own name and two in collaboration with Italian multi-instrumentalist Francesco Turrisi (most recently, *You’re the One*, in Summer 2023, to much critical acclaim), all on Nonesuch Records. *American Railroad*, her first album in collaboration with the Silkroad Ensemble, was released in November 2024.

A founding member of the landmark Black string band, Carolina Chocolate Drops, and the all-female banjo supergroup, Our Native Daughters, Giddens is as much a curator as

a creator. She is the current Artistic Director of the Yo-Yo Ma-founded Silkroad Ensemble, hosts a TV show on PBS, *My Music with Rhiannon Giddens*, and has hosted two podcasts (*Aria Code* from New York City’s NPR affiliate station WQXR, which ran for three seasons, and *American Railroad* from Silkroad). Giddens has published two children’s books and written and performed music for the soundtrack of *Red Dead Redemption II*, one of the best-selling video games of all time. She appeared as a recurring cast member on ABC’s hit drama *Nashville* and as a music history expert on Ken Burns’ *Country Music* series on PBS. In 2025, she will launch her own music festival in Durham, NC, called Biscuits & Banjos, to celebrate Black culture outside the mainstream.

*Pitchfork* declared, “few artists are so fearless and so ravenous in their exploration” — a journey that has led NPR to name her one of its 25 Most Influential Women Musicians of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and *American Songwriter* to call her “one of the most important musical minds currently walking the planet.”

[rhiannongiddens.com](http://rhiannongiddens.com)



## WILL LIVERMAN

### **CALLED "A VOICE FOR THIS HISTORIC MOMENT"**

(*Washington Post*), Grammy Award-winning baritone Will Liverman is the recipient of the 2022 Beverly Sills Artist Award and the co-creator of *The Factotum* — "mic-drop fabulous good" (*Opera News*) — which premiered at Lyric Opera Chicago in 2023.

Following summer 2024 appearances at the BBC Proms in Britten's *War Requiem*, Sibelius's *The Origin of Fire* and Scriabin's *Prometheus*, *Poem of Fire* led by Andris Nelsons at Tanglewood, and Aspen Music Festival's Opera Benefit, Liverman reprises the iconic role of Papageno in the Metropolitan Opera's holiday presentation of *The Magic Flute*, returns to Lyric Opera of Chicago as Marcello in *La Bohème*, and joins Dutch National Opera for another season, this time as Ned Keene in *Peter Grimes*. He makes his San Francisco Opera house debut during the 2024/2025 season, also portraying Marcello in Puccini's *La bohème*.

Concert engagements include Kaija Saariaho's *Sombre* at Carnegie Hall with the International Contemporary Ensemble; *Carmina Burana* with the San Francisco Symphony; the London Symphony Orchestra led by Sir Antonio

Pappano; works by Burleigh, Vaughan Williams, and Still at The Concertgebouw; works by Schubert, Burleigh, and Larsen with the Oxford International Song Festival; Brahms' *Requiem* with the Rhode Island Philharmonic; Shawn Okpebholo's *Two Black Churches* and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Oakland Symphony; a song cycle of his own compositions at National Sawdust; New York Festival of Song at the Kaufman Music Center; and String Theory at the Hunter.

Recording projects include *Show Me The Way* (Cedille Records, 2024), a celebration of American women composers, and *Dreams of a New Day: Songs by Black Composers* (Cedille Records, 2021), both nominated for the Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album; *The Dunbar/Moore Sessions — Volume I* (Lexicon Classics, 2023), a collection of original art song composed, played, and sung by Liverman himself; and *Whither Must I Wander* (Odradek Records, 2020), named one of the *Chicago Tribune's* "best classical recordings of 2020."

Liverman is an alumnus of the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago and was a Glimmerglass Festival Young Artist. He holds degrees from The Juilliard School (M.M.) and Wheaton College in Illinois (B.M.)

[willliverman.com](http://willliverman.com)



## REGINALD MOBLEY

### GRAMMY-NOMINATED AMERICAN COUNTERTENOR

Reginald Mobley is globally renowned for his interpretation of baroque, classical, and modern repertoire, and leads a prolific career on both sides of the Atlantic.

An advocate for diversity in music and its programming, Reginald became the first-ever Programming Consultant for the Handel & Haydn Society following several years of leading H&H in its community engaging *Every Voice* concerts. Reginald is leading a research project in the UK, funded by the AHRC, to uncover music by composers from diverse backgrounds and is also Visiting Artist for Diversity Outreach with Apollo's Fire and Artistic Advisor at the Portland Baroque Orchestra.

Highlights of recent seasons include a diverse range of recitals with piano and continuo (Chicago, De Bijloke in Gent, Wigmore Hall, MA Festival in Bruges, Bayreuth Baroque festival) as well as regular appearances with major American orchestras and specialized ensembles in North America — the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Early Music Vancouver, Collegium San Diego, Agave, Seraphic Fire, and Washington Bach

Consort — and Europe: Nederlandse Bachvereniging, Wiener Akademie, Monteverdi Choir, Academy of Ancient Music, Cambridge, English Baroque Soloists, Bach Oxford Soloists, Dunedin Consort (at the Aldeburgh and Edinburgh festivals), and Orchestre de Chambre de Paris (Festival de Saint-Denis). Reginald has also been invited to tour Australia with Bach Akademie Australia and Japan for a series of concerts with Bach Collegium Japan under the baton of Masaaki Suzuki.

His first solo CD with Alpha Classics was released in June 2023 to coincide with a major series of concerts with pianist Baptiste Trotignon at the Aix-en-Provence and BBC Proms festivals. The CD won both an Opus Klassik and an Edison award. A second Alpha recording will give tribute to English baroque music (Purcell, Dowland, and Sancho) and its influence on modern American repertoire (with theorbo/guitar and violone/doublebass). Reginald also features on several albums, including with the Monteverdi Choir, Agave Baroque, and Stuttgart Bach Society.

[reginaldmobley.com](http://reginaldmobley.com)



## KAREN SLACK

### **PRAISED FOR HER “SIZEABLE VOICE THAT CAPTURED ALL OF THE VACILLATING EMOTIONS”**

(*The New York Times*), Grammy Award-nominated soprano Karen Slack is celebrated as both an extraordinary performer and a change-maker in classical music.

Highlighting Slack's 2024–2025 season is the nationwide tour of her new commissioning project, *African Queens*, a recital of new art songs by Jasmine Barnes, Damien Geter, Jessie Montgomery, Shawn Okpebholo, Dave Ragland, Carlos Simon, and Joel Thompson. In July 2024, she released her debut commercial recording, *Beyond the Years* (Azica Records), alongside pianist Michelle Cann and ONEcomposer; the project was nominated for a 2025 Grammy Award in the category, Best Classical Solo Vocal Album.

Slack has performed at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, and Scottish Opera, among many other companies. In concert, her credits include the Melbourne and Sydney symphonies, Bergen Philharmonic, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall, and Philadelphia Orchestra. She made her New York Philharmonic debut in May 2024.

A recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, Slack is an Artistic Advisor for Portland Opera, serves on the board of the American Composers Orchestra and Astral Artists, and holds a faculty position at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. During the 2024–2025 season, she serves as Artist-in-Residence at both Lyric Opera of Chicago and Babson College.

A native Philadelphian, Slack is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and the San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program.

[sopranokarenslack.com](http://sopranokarenslack.com)



## PAUL SÁNCHEZ

### **TWICE GRAMMY-NOMINATED PIANIST AND COMPOSER PAUL SÁNCHEZ HAS BEEN PRAISED AS A "GREAT ARTIST"**

(José Feghali; Cecilia Rodrigo), "the ideal interpreter . . . performing with clear virtuosity" (*Fanfare* magazine), and for his "clarity, sensitivity" (*The New Yorker*) and "prodigious technical capacities" (*The Rehearsal Studio*).

In a *Fanfare* review of Sánchez' CD, *Magus Inspiens*, featuring three Sánchez song cycles, Colin Clarke declares, "This is one of the most beautiful discs in my collection. . . . Haunting in the extreme," while WFMT's Henry Fogel, former president of the League of American Orchestras and Chicago Symphony Orchestra, states, "This is hauntingly beautiful music . . . generously filled with melodic inspiration and evocative atmosphere . . . works of originality and a distinctive musical personality."

Sherod Santos, American poet and translator of the Sappho texts in Sánchez' song cycle, *ὁδοιπορία* (*the journey*), describes Sánchez' composition as "a magnificent achievement, a work of great innovation and hypnotic effect, impossible to walk away from unmoved."

Sánchez' *the journey* is also the subject of a chapter in *Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century*

*Song Cycles: Analytical Pathways Toward Performance*, alongside chapters on works by Samuel Barber, William Bolcom, George Crumb, Benjamin Britten, Jennifer Higdon, Libby Larson, Francis Poulenc, Dmitri Shostakovich, and other composers.

Sánchez is a recording artist with ten CD releases as of 2024. Recent albums include *Dreams of a New Day* with Will Liverman (Cedille Records), which was a *BBC Music Magazine* "Album of the Month" and reached No. 1 on *Billboard's* "Traditional Classical Albums" chart; *Seria Ludo — Piano Music by Graham Lynch* (Divine Art Records); and *Mysteria Fidei* (Innova Records), with Kayleen Sánchez, performing music of David M. Gordon.

Dr. Sánchez has served as Director of Piano Studies at the College of Charleston and on faculty at Baylor University and Wheaton College, and is co-founder of the San Francisco International Piano Festival. He studied with Tamás Ungár, with Maria Teresa Monteyes and Alicia de Larrocha, as a Fulbright fellow; and with Douglas Humpherys at the Eastman School of Music. Sánchez is a Steinway Artist.

[paultsanchez.com](http://paultsanchez.com)



# JULIAN VELASCO

## DESCRIBED AS A "PHENOMENAL SAX SOLOIST"

(*Chicago Tribune*) with "impressive agility, control, and stylistic ability" (*Chicago Classical Review*), Julian Velasco (he/him) is a Chicago-based Mexican-American artist, educator, and advocate for contemporary arts. Raised in the diverse musical culture of Los Angeles, his background draws from classical, jazz, experimental, and popular styles whose influences inform his approach to all music.

Known as "both an infectiously joyous interpreter of new music and a monster improviser" (*Chicago Tribune*), Velasco has premiered over 100 new works, commissioning and collaborating with a wide range of artists including the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Ron Carter, Chris Cerrone, Mei-Ann Chen, Billy Childs, Viet Cuong, Nathalie Joachim, Christian McBride, Nico Muhly, Alex Mincek, PRISM Quartet, Annika Sokolofsky, Jeff Scott, Augusta Read Thomas, Zhou Tian, and Rodney Whitaker.

His first solo album *As We Are* (Cedille Records) garnered national attention, debuting at No. 4 on *Billboard's* Traditional Classical Albums Chart and was reviewed as, "an exciting album of contemporary music . . . performed with passion and precision" (*The Whole Note*), "fabulous" (*Third Coast Review*), and "gorgeous" (*Gramophone*).

Velasco is the Artistic Director and soprano saxophonist of ~Nois saxophone quartet. Founded in 2016, ~Nois has become one of the premier ensembles in the U.S. by combining contemporary classical music and improvisation in unique concert experiences. Heralded as "fiendishly good" (*Chicago Tribune*), ~Nois has been awarded top prizes at prestigious chamber music competitions including the Fischhoff and the M-Prize competitions. Nois' most recent portrait album of the composer collective *Kinds of Kings — Kinds of ~Nois* (Bright Shiny Things) — debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Classical Crossover Chart in March 2024. Since its founding, ~Nois has given nearly 200 performances in 27 states from coast to coast.

Velasco made his orchestral debut at age 17 as a soloist with the South Coast Symphony. In the 2021–2022 season, he presented the world premiere of James Aikman's saxophone quartet concerto with PRISM Quartet and the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. In 2022–2023, he made his Chicago Symphony Center concerto-debut with Mei-Ann Chen and Chicago Sinfonietta.

Cedille Records' inaugural Emerging Artist Competition winner and a Luminarts Cultural Foundation Fellow in Classical Music, Velasco holds degrees from Northwestern University, where he is currently a doctoral candidate, and Michigan State University. His teachers include James Barrera, Diego Rivera, Joseph Lulloff, and Taimur Sullivan.

[julianvelascomusic.com](http://julianvelascomusic.com)



**R** a boy, about 19 or 20 years of age, named **HENRY**. He is about 4 feet 10 inches high, large full eyes, has one shoulder more prominent than the other, and is very plausible in his address and conversation. He has lost the first joint of the fore-finger of his right hand. The clothes he had on when he left were a coarse woollen sack, striped pant-loons, a small cloth cap and a pair of stout shoes; has a full head of hair, parted at one side. He was purchased in Charleston from Mr. Ryan, and will proudly endeavor to find his way there. A reward of \$20 will be paid for his delivery into any jail in the State.

**M. O'HEARN.**

January 24, 1854.



**T**WO Negro Men, the same as appeared in the custody of the Sheriff of Early county, described by him in following manner:

**JIM,**

about twenty-seven years of age, 5 feet 9 inches high, light complexion.



**50 DOLLARS** reward - a runaway, kidnapped, from the steamer Laurel Hill, about 20th of May, the negro boy **HENRY**, about 20 years of age, about 6 feet 6 inches or 6 feet 8 inches high, very black, round face, he has a scar between his shoulders. The above reward will be paid to any person that will return him, to No. 12 Canal street, or to the steamer Laurel Hill.

**TRAIN 1858**

**R** a man, tolerably bright, about 175 pounds. He has a look when spoken to: The end of the forefinger of his left hand has been cut off, and a sharp hard growth on the end of it. I think he is lurking in the lower end of Cabarrus, Rocky River, where he was raised. All persons are forbidden to harbor or assist him, under the penalty of law. I will pay the above reward for his apprehension and confinement in any jail, if I can get him.

**WILLIAM HAMILTON**

Negro Head Depot, Union

April 9, 1860.

**Beef Cattle Wanted**

...detected; they were on the 10th of Alabama, Dec. 1859. They should pass on the 10th of Savannah, un-

**25 Dollars Reward**

**R**ANAWAY from N. S. A. Chaffin, of Salisbury, N. C. about twelve months ago, a mulatto girl named **ELIZA**, of small stature, and tolerably strong. Said girl was sold first at the sale of Matthew Chaffin's property, and was bought by Wm. Murphy. The above reward will be paid for her delivery to me, or for her confinement in Rowan jail. She was lately seen on George W. Brown's plantation, 10 miles west of Salisbury. N. S. A. CHAFFIN. July 1, 1851:3:ppd. By NATHAN FE...

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# CREDITS

## PRODUCER

Shawn E Okpebholo

## ENGINEER

Brian Porick

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