

SATURDAY, APRIL 23 | 3PM | PICKMAN HALL

SOUL FOOD

EXPLORING THE BLACK EXPERIENCE
THROUGH INHERITED TRADITIONS

COMPOSED BY JOI HARPER

APPETIZERS

I. BELLS FOR PIANO AND VIOLIN

NOAH STONE, PIANO AND EMMA BOYD, VIOLIN

II. IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS FOR SOLO FLUTE

CHRISTINA GEORGE, FLUTE

III. AFFIRMATIONS FOR PIANO AND PERCUSSION

NOAH STONE, PIANO AND SAMUEL LAGREGO, PERCUSSION

ENTREES

IV. A TOAST, A PRAYER FOR VOICE AND STRING QUARTET

JOI HARPER, VOICE, EMMA BOYD AND SYDNEY SCARLETT, VIOLINS,

ISAIAH HOPPER, VIOLA, KAI CRULL, CELLO

V. DIS TASTES DIFFERENT FOR PIERROT ENSEMBLE

CHRISTINA GEORGE, FLUTE, LORENZO MACUJA, CLARINET, DELANO BELL, BASSOON, MIGUEL PETRIS,

FRENCH HORN, EMMA BOYD AND SYDNEY SCARLETT, VIOLINS, ISAIAH HOPPER, VIOLA, KAI CRULL,

CELLO, TESSA SHUNE, PIANO, SAMUEL LAGREGO, PERCUSSION

DESSERTS

VI. SOUL SEARCHIN' FOR SOLO PIANO

TESSA SHUNE, PIANO

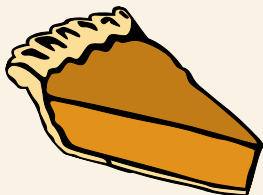
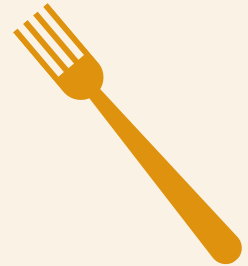
VII. GOODBYE FOR NOW FOR PIERROT ENSEMBLE

CHRISTINA GEORGE, FLUTE, DELANO BELL, BASSOON, MIGUEL PETRIS, FRENCH HORN, EMMA BOYD AND

SYDNEY SCARLETT, VIOLINS, ISAIAH HOPPER, VIOLA, KAI CRULL, CELLO,

TESSA SHUNE, PIANO, SAMUEL LAGREGO, PERCUSSION

THIS RECITAL IS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE IN MUSIC COMPOSITION.
JOI HARPER IS A STUDENT OF KATE PUKINSKIS.



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PROGRAM NOTES

Today's concert will explore the African American experience through the lens of soul food. This multi-movement work is inspired by my personal enjoyment of this cuisine through not only the flavors of the food but also the community it encourages. Soul food represents so many aspects of life in America. It reminds us of a culture that was shaped after our own culture was taken away. We built these traditions from the few things we were allowed to remember. Soul food represents the creativity and perseverance of my ancestors. It is a special heritage that was passed down to me from multiple generations. I am glad to now have the opportunity to share that with you, through these compositions.

I. Bells - Ancestors, I call upon you now to show us the truth. Let us learn the story behind such amazing creativity and passion. Hear our bells and teach us your history, so that we may reflect and grow.

II. In Their Footsteps - Oh, how you have persevered. They gave you table scraps and you made a feast. I am in awe of how much you have overcome. It is in your footsteps that I have learned to face my own hurdles head-on and keep moving forward.

III. Affirmations (I live. I breathe. I am. I belong.) - In a world where black people are constantly excluded and overlooked, I gain power in recognizing my own worth. These affirmations are a reminder that as we live, even though the world may try break us apart, we are worthy of space and we will always belong.

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PROGRAM NOTES CONTINUED

IV. A Toast, A Prayer - I inherited the tradition of soul food through both of my grandmothers, as they inherited it from their parents and grandparents. This lineage is what ties me to my ancestors, and with that, I cannot forget all that has passed for me to receive this knowledge today. I am grateful to all of these ancestors for the life I've been given.

V. Dis Tastes Different...- How would your food taste if you knew exactly where it came from? How would it taste if you knew all the sacrifice that went into presenting what is right in front of you? Would you still be able to enjoy it or would you no longer be able to stomach it?

VI. Soul Searchin' - I must now reflect on everything I have learned and unlearned. The harsh truths of the past carry so much weight and I am unsure how I fit into this tradition. Are these the same flavors I learned to love? Ancestors, I ask you again to guide me on this journey of explorations and realizations.

VII. Goodbye for Now - Though there is still so much to learn, it is time to leave. Though I am conflicted about my history, I understand that it lives within me. And so I pass it on to you, so that you may share this story with the world. Thank you ancestors for leading me to this place. May we all continue to learn from your wisdom and guidance.

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Texts

IV. A Toast, A Prayer

Thank you all for coming here and surrounding me
Dearest friends and family
Today's a celebration!

I give you a feast!
A feast with my community
Where we remember
Centuries of tradition.

A tradition passed down to me from grandmothers
Whose ancestors, stripped of legacy
Created a new community

Connected all these strangers
Brought together by the worst of humanity
And here in the 21st century
Am I, remembering their legacy

With a heart full of gratitude
I give my deepest thanks to -

To mothers and daughters
To sons and fathers
To husbands and to wives
I owe to you my life

To aunts, uncles, and cousins
To our cherished reunion
To grandmothers and grandfathers
To my dearest friends

To you who have inspired me
Shown me where I ought to be
Shown me the world I now know

To you who paved a way with your legacy
Made way for millions like me
Oh how I love you so

To pioneers and fighters
Protectors and soldiers
The loud and the silent
The peaceful and the violent
A toast to you!

To all who've made my life a possibility
Thank you all for coming here and surrounding
me

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About the Composer:

Joi Harper is a composer, vocalist, and teaching artist based in Boston, Massachusetts. Their music focuses on exploring our world and commenting on our unique experiences. As a musician with such a diverse background, she often includes a multitude of styles and genres within her own work, prioritizing the sounds she heard growing up and exploring the vast world of music we are all a part of.

Joi's works consist of choral music, chamber works, and song. In this work, like many of her other works she uses her music to explore concepts of heritage, culture, social experiences, and everyday life. Joi's music has been heard nationally at the American Choral Directors Association National Conference in 2019 and debuted internationally in Nairobi, Kenya. Joi has received commissions from the Chroma Collective and Castle of Our Skins organizations. They have also composed and arranged for the Nairobi Chamber Chorus, George Mason University Chorale, Transient Canvas, Longy School of Music Ensemble Uncaged, and many more. At Longy, Joi has studied with both Katherine Pukinskis and Amy Beth Kirsten. She is finishing a Master of Music degree at Longy School of Music of Bard College (Music Composition), where she was awarded the Nadia and Lili Boulanger Scholarship and the Presidential Scholarship.

Joi's unique introduction into the field of composition inspires her to think of new ways to include more creators in the field, predominantly minority and female composers. As a multi-instrumentalist growing up, Joi was regularly surrounded by all different kinds of music and several different kinds of composers. She feels that it is important to recognize that composers exist in all genres and can often blur the lines between genres. In doing so throughout her own writing, performing, and teaching she encourages genre inclusivity and exploring music beyond one's own comfort zone. She continues to find new ways to incorporate social justice into her work and life. Joi looks forward to finding new ways to accomplish this goal and awaits what lies ahead. Learn more at joiharper.com.