

### **Adolphus Hailstork, composer**

Dr. Hailstork has written numerous works for chorus, solo voice, piano, organ, various chamber ensembles, band, orchestra, and opera. Among his early compositions are: CELEBRATION, recorded by the Detroit Symphony in 1976; OUT OF THE DEPTHS (1977), and AMERICAN GUERNICA (1983), are two band works which won national competitions. CONSORT PIECE (1995) commissioned by the Norfolk (Va.) Chamber Ensemble, was awarded first prize by the University of Delaware Festival of Contemporary Music.

Significant performances by major orchestras (Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York) have been led by leading conductors such as James de Priest, Paul Freeman, Daniel Barenboim, Kurt Masur, Lorin Maazel, Jo Ann Falletta and David Lockington. This March, Thomas Wilkins conducted Hailstork's AN AMERICAN PORT OF CALL with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The composer's second symphony (commissioned by the Detroit Symphony, and second opera, JOSHUA'S BOOTS (commissioned by the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and the Kansas City Lyric Opera) were both premiered in 1999. Hailstork's second and third symphonies were recorded by the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra (David Lockington) and were released by Naxos. Another Naxos recording, AN AMERICAN PORT OF CALL (Virginia Symphony Orchestra) was released in spring 2012.

Recent commissions include RISE FOR FREEDOM, an opera about the Underground Railroad, premiered in the fall of 2007 by the Cincinnati Opera Company, SET ME ON A ROCK (re: Hurricane Katrina), for chorus and orchestra, commissioned by the Houston Choral Society (2008), and the choral ballet, THE GIFT OF THE MAGI, for treble chorus and orchestra, (2009). Hailstork's newest works include THE WORLD CALLED (based on Rita Dove's poem TESTIMONIAL), a work for soprano, chorus and orchestra commissioned by the Oratorio Society of Virginia (premiered in May 2018) and STILL HOLDING ON (February 2019) an orchestra work commissioned and premiered by the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He is currently working on his Fourth Symphony, and A KNEE ON A NECK (tribute to George Floyd) for chorus and orchestra. Dr. Hailstork resides in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and is Professor of Music and Eminent Scholar at Old Dominion University in Norfolk.

### **Matthew Vera, violin**

Violinist and Violist Matthew Vera is known for his versatility as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader.

Matthew has been a member of the Boston Philharmonic's first violin section since 2010. He recently stepped in as guest concertmaster to perform Ein Heldenleben to critical acclaim: "Playing with pure tone, terrific character, and not a bit of hesitation, Vera delivered an account of the solo part that was wholly captivating". (Boston Arts Fuse); "Matthew Vera projected non-stop, drop-dead gorgeous tone, alternately flippant and ravishing, as directed. A virtual golden spotlight enwreathed him in laurels." (Boston Musical Intelligencer). Orchestrally, Matthew performs in many ensembles including: The Boston Philharmonic, The Albany Symphony, The Portland

Symphony, The Rhode Island Philharmonic, The Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Teatro Nuovo, Eureka Ensemble, and the New Bedford Symphony.

An avid chamber musician, Matthew is the first violinist of the emerging Izarra String Quartet. Izarra explores fresh interpretations of the classic repertoire with a keen focus on amplifying compositional voices of the LGBTQIA + BIPOC communities. Matthew is a violinist with Castle of our Skins, a concert and educational series dedicated to celebrating Black artistry through music. He has also been heard with Radius Ensemble, Juventas New Music Ensemble, and Ogunquit Chamber Music Festival.

A native of Tucson, Arizona, Matthew is a graduate of The New England Conservatory where he studied with James Buswell, Lucy Chapman, and Donald Weilerstein. His mentors have included: The Borromeo String Quartet, Roger Tapping, Martha Katz, and John Heiss.

### **Mina Lavcheva, violin**

Violinist Mina Lavcheva is a native of Sofia, Bulgaria, where she graduated from the National School of Music "L. Pipkov". An active performer from an early age, Mina has appeared as a soloist, chamber and orchestra player throughout Europe and North America. She holds a Bachelor and a Master Degree in Music Performance from LSU School of Music and Boston University respectively.

Mina is a sought-after and frequently engaged artist by numerous chamber and orchestral ensembles in the New England area. Currently, she performs as a member of the Portland Symphony Orchestra (Maine) and Rhode Island Philharmonic, where she has served as acting concertmaster on numerous occasions. Mina also serves as concertmaster for the Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra and has appeared in performances with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Handel and Haydn Society, Arcadia Players, and Odyssey Opera, to name a few. As a chamber musician, she has performed at the Newport Music Festival, is a violinist/violist for the Zograf String Quartet, and enjoys frequent performances with Castle of our Skins.

### **Ashleigh Gordon, viola**

Described as a "charismatic and captivating performer," Ashleigh Gordon has recorded with Switzerland's Ensemble Proton and Germany's Ensemble Modern; performed with Grammy-award winning BMOP and Grammy-nominated A Far Cry string ensemble; and appeared at the prestigious BBC Proms Festival with the Chineke! Orchestra. Comfortable on an international stage, Ashleigh has performed in the Royal Albert and Royal Festival Halls (London), Konzerthaus Berlin and Oper Frankfurt (Germany), Gare du Nord and Dampfzentrale Bern (Switzerland), Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Lee Hysan Concert Hall (Hong Kong), and throughout Sofia, Bulgaria as part of the multi-disciplinary 180 Degrees Festival.

Ashleigh is co-founder, Artistic/Executive Director and violist of Castle of our Skins, a Boston-based concert and educational series devoted to celebrating Black Artistry through music. In recognition of her work, she has presented at IDEAS UMass

Boston Conference and 180 Degrees Festival in Bulgaria; has been featured in the International Musician and Improper Bostonian magazines as well as the Boston Globe; and was awarded the 2016 Charles Walton Diversity Advocate Award from the American Federation of Musicians. She is a 2015 St. Botolph Emerging Artist Award recipient, a 2019 Brother Thomas Fellow, a nominee for the 2020 "Americans for the Arts Johnson Fellowship for Artists Transforming Communities," and named one of WBUR's "ARTery 25", twenty-five millennials of color impacting Boston's arts and culture scene.

### **Jing Li, cello**

Hailed as "an outstanding instrumentalist and musician" with "exceptional musicality, integrity, and polish," cellist Jing Li has performed around the world as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. She has made solo appearances with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, Acadiana Symphony of Louisiana, Indiana University Orchestra, Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra, and Cuenca Symphony Orchestra in Ecuador. An avid chamber musician, Ms. Li has collaborated with such distinguished artists as Miriam Fried, Donald Weilerstein, Lawrence Wolfe, and the Borromeo String Quartet, as well as participating in internationally renowned festivals including the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, Banff Centre for the Arts, and the Piatigorsky Seminar for Cellists.

Currently based in Boston and New York City, she can be heard performing with A Far Cry Chamber Orchestra, Boston Ballet, Boston Lyric Opera, and Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), as well as with the New York Philharmonic and on various Broadway shows. As a dedicated teacher and chamber musician, she recently joined the Portland Piano Trio and serves as an Artistic Director with 240 Strings, an organization providing free musical education to students unable to afford instruction. She is a top prizewinner in the Corpus Christi International String Competition and the Irving M. Klein International String Competition, where she received the Allen P. Weiss Memorial Prize for Best Performance of the Commissioned Work by David Liptak.

### **Sarah Bob, piano**

Pianist Sarah Bob, hailed as "sumptuous and eloquent" (Boston Globe) and that "dynamic player...superstar" (National Sawdust), is a soloist and chamber musician noted for her charismatic performances, colorful playing and diverse programming. The goal, her strong suit, is to introduce music in a loving, inclusive, and intoxicating way.

Sarah is founding director of New Gallery Concert Series, a combination of new music and new visual art along with their creators, and Nasty Cooperative, dialogue driven artistic events created to build community and raise funds for organizations in need.

Her accolades include top prizewinner of Holland's International Gaudeamus Competition, New England Conservatory's Outstanding Alumni Award, and instant world-wide acclaim for her most recent solo album ...nobody move.... She is an original and active member of Radius Ensemble and Primary Duo, maintains a

private studio, and is on faculty at Longy School of Music of Bard College. More information: [www.sarahbob.net](http://www.sarahbob.net).

**Brianna Robinson, soprano**

Soprano Brianna J. Robinson, whom The Boston Globe proclaimed as, "...a radiant voice and presence" is a native of Ravenna, Ohio. She is a former Jane and Steven Akin Emerging Artist with Boston Lyric Opera where she covered and performed roles such as Lucy in Gregory Spears' *Fellow Travelers*, Mimi (cover) in Puccini's *La Boheme*, Lena in Ana Solokovic's *Svabda* and covered several roles in Paul Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale*. She recently stepped on stage as Julie in Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels' 2023 Pulitzer Prize-winning opera, *Omar*.

In the 2023-2024 season, Ms. Robinson makes her Carnegie Hall debut with The Cecilia Chorus of NY in Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Dona nobis pacem*. She also returns to Boston Lyric Opera as Jennette in Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-George's *The Anonymous Lover*, also covering the role of Leontine. Last season, she made multiple concert debuts with several orchestras, including the Akron Symphony Orchestra, Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra/New World Chorale, and the Handel and Haydn Society in the powerful performances of 'Crossing the Deep'. Ms. Robinson was named a finalist in the Benjamin Matthews Vocal Competition with Opera Ebony and was awarded first prize at the 6th Getting to Carnegie Competition. She has participated in international programs including the Berlin Opera Academy and Opernfest Prague. She made her international debut in Ruse, Bulgaria in 2021 creating the role of Ophelia in the world premiere of Joseph Summer's *Hamlet*.

Ms. Robinson is a proud graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University and the Eastman School of Music.