

# PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW  
NOTES

Sphinx Virtuosi

Thursday, October 14 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

## PROGRAM (selection of notes)

### ***Ev'ry Voice***

**Xavier Foley**

**Born:** August 9, 1994, Marietta, GA

**Composed:** 2020

**Duration:** 10 minutes

This work is an homage and pays tribute to the Black National Anthem. *Lift Every Voice and Sing* was first written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson. Johnson was an American writer and civil rights activist who also led the NAACP. The poem was set to music by Johnson's brother, John Rosamond Johnson, and as a complete work, adopted by the NAACP as its official anthem. Today, we know *Lift Every Voice and Sing* as the soundtrack of the African American Civil Rights Movement. Xavier Foley, a bassist and composer, and the winner of the Avery Fisher Career Grant and a Sphinx Competition Laureate, created two separate versions of the work *Lift Ev'ry Voice*, commissioned by the Sphinx Organization. The version we will hear was created in 2020 as a special feature for the Sphinx's program *Land of the Free*, which illuminates the wealth of musical talent among American composers.

### **Andante Cantabile from A Minor Quartet**

**Florence Price**

**Born:** April 9, 1887, Little Rock, AR

**Died:** June 3, 1953, Chicago, IL

**Composed:** 1935

**Duration:** 8 minutes

The A-minor string quartet is Florence Price's second contribution to the genre. It was preceded by her G-major quartet (1929) and followed by her *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint* for string quartet (1951). Stylistically, the melodic and harmonic language of the A-minor quartet more obviously invokes mid-20th-century idioms than does either of the other quartets. The work's second movement, which we will hear tonight, has a gentle, rocking lyricism and is infused with melodic and harmonic turns that bring the

melancholy beauty of Black idioms into the tradition-bound stylistic vocabulary of the mid-20th-century string quartet.

### ***Banner!***

**Jessie Montgomery**

**Born:** 1981, New York, NY

**Composed:** 2014

**Duration:** 10 minutes

Jessie Montgomery says, "*Banner!* was commissioned by the Sphinx Organization as a tribute for the 200th anniversary of the Star Spangled Banner, the American national anthem. *Banner!* is a rhapsody on the Star Spangled Banner theme. Drawing on musical and historical sources from various world anthems and patriotic songs, I've made an attempt to answer the question: "What does an anthem for the 21st century sound like in today's multi-cultural environment?" The structure is loosely based on traditional marching band form where there are several strains or contrasting sections; I have drawn on the drum line chorus as a source for the rhythmic underpinning in the finale."

### **Concerto for Strings, Op. 33 [Sel.]**

**Alberto Ginastera**

**Born:** April 11, 1916, Buenos Aires, Argentina

**Died:** June 25, 1983 in Geneva, Switzerland

**Composed:** 1965

**Duration:** 24 minutes

To fulfill a commission from the National Institute of Culture and Fine Arts of Venezuela for a work to be premiered by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra at a 1966 festival in Caracas, Ginastera expanded much of his 1958 String Quartet No. 2. He jettisoned the first of the quartet's five movements, shuffled the others, beefed up the instrumentation, and, in places, composed additional passages. The quartet had been Ginastera's first entirely serial work, but its powerful rhythms and melodic contours tied it closely to Argentine folk dance and song.