

Five-Day All Black Classical Musicians Festival

Written by Staff Writer

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The Charleston Symphony Orchestra Spiritual Ensemble, in association with Buster-Elsie Productions, is pleased to announce the Colour of Music Festival, October 23-27, 2013, a five-day all-black classical musicians festival featuring black musicians, vocalists, and orchestra leaders performing piano, organ, and voice recitals, chamber ensembles and orchestra and a newly formed Colour of Music Chorale. Over twenty performances will showcase the breadth and influence of blacks on the classical music world past and present.

Featuring internationally acclaimed black chamber ensemble players and various classical artists to form the orchestra, the Festival will showcase some of the top black classical musicians in the US, trained at some of the most prestigious music schools, conservatories and universities in the world converging in a number of venues including Charleston's historic Dock Street Theatre, City Gallery at Waterfront Park, Memminger Auditorium, historic Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, Grace Episcopal Church and many others. Few classical music enthusiasts are aware of the contributions of an African-French composer, Joseph Boulogne, also known as Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges. Preceding Mozart by 11 years, Saint-Georges composed four operas and many mid-18th century works on par with or exceeding his contemporaries. His compositions are known around the world but garner little notice in the United States.

In recognition of black classical composers, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra Spiritual Ensemble is pleased to host a history-making event that will showcase masterworks by acclaimed composers such as William Grant Still and George Walker, who received the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1996.

For years, black classically trained voice professionals have made enormous strides beginning with Marian Anderson's groundbreaking 1955 debut at the Metropolitan Opera. Leontyne Price, Jessye Norman, Kathleen Battle, Denyce Graves and many others have followed, showcasing

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the “colour” of voice. On the orchestral stage, however, the prevalence of black classically trained instrumentalists in America lags behind their vocal counterparts.

Within the U.S. military, the corporate world, professional sports and politics, black Americans have moved beyond the boundaries that held back their ancestors. Yet today, only on rare occasions does a black conductor, concertmaster or principal classical musician grace the concert stage of a major American city or regional orchestra.

Full schedule and tickets online: www.colourofmusic.org or call (866) 811-4111. Tickets also available at the door one hour before each performance.