Saturday, March 23, 8pm | THE MR. AND MRS. BRENT L. HENRY CONCERT
THOMAS WILKINS conducting

ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK  “AN AMERICAN PORT OF CALL”

ROBERTO SIERRA  CONCERTO FOR SAXOPHONES AND ORCHESTRA
I. Rhythmic
II. Tender
III. Playful
IV. Fast (with swing)
JAMES CARTER

{INTERMISSION}

PRICE  “SYMPHONIC REFLECTIONS,” FROM SYMPHONY NO. 3
III. Juba (Allegro)
II. Andante ma non troppo
IV. Scherzo. Finale (Allegro)

ELLINGTON  “A TONE PARALLEL TO HARLEM (HARLEM SUITE)”

TONIGHT’S PERFORMANCE OF ELLINGTON’S “A TONE PARALLEL TO HARLEM (HARLEM SUITE)” IS SUPPORTED BY A GIFT FROM DR. ROGER AND JILLIAN TUNG IN MEMORY OF LLOYD TUNG.

BANK OF AMERICA AND TAKEDA PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY LIMITED ARE PROUD TO SPONSOR THE BSO’S 2018-19 SEASON.

This concert will end about 9:50.
Concertmaster Malcolm Lowe performs on a Stradivarius violin, known as the “Lafont,” generously donated to the Boston Symphony Orchestra by the O’Block Family.
First associate concertmaster Tamara Smirnova performs on a 1754 J.B. Guadagnini violin, the “ex-Zazofsky,” and James Cooke performs on a 1778 Nicolò Gagliano violin, both generously donated to the orchestra by Michael L. Nieland, M.D., in loving memory of Mischa Nieland, a member of the cello section from 1943 to 1988.
Steinway & Sons Pianos, selected exclusively for Symphony Hall.
The BSO’s Steinway & Sons pianos were purchased through a generous gift from Gabriella and Leo Beranek.
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In consideration of the performers and those around you, please turn off all electronic equipment during the performance, including tablets, cellular phones, pagers, watch alarms, messaging devices of any kind, anything that emits an audible signal, and anything that glows. Thank you for your cooperation.
Please note that the use of audio or video recording devices, or taking pictures of the artists—whether photographs or videos—is prohibited during concerts.

The Program in Brief...
Born in Rochester and raised in Albany, New York, Adolphus Hailstork has taught for many years at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. His music is often triggered by historical or geographical narratives, frequently those based in the American, and the uniquely African-American, experience. An American Port of Call is an overture with optimistic, energetic origins. Working on a commission from the Norfolk-based Virginia Symphony, Hailstork wrote a piece inspired by the bustle and variety of Norfolk itself.
The prolific Puerto Rican-born composer Roberto Sierra grew up near San Juan, where as a child he absorbed the influences of that cultural crossroads, including classical music, jazz, and Afro-Caribbean popular music. After his initial training in San Juan, he worked with the Hungarian-born György Ligeti in Europe, developing an approach to style that knows few borders. Although mostly fully notated, Sierra’s Concerto for Saxophones provides James Carter, for whom it was written, plenty of opportunity to improvise. The music ranges from sharp and rhythmic to achingly lyrical to rock-and-roll.
Florence Price was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, attended the New England Conservatory, and was an active part
of Chicago’s African-American musical and intellectual community. She was the first African-American woman to have a work performed by a major American orchestra, her Symphony in E minor, played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1933. Her Third Symphony was commissioned by the Franklin Roosevelt-era Works Progress Administration, and was first performed by the Detroit Civic Orchestra in 1940. From this half-hour work, BSO Germeshausen Youth and Family Concerts Conductor Thomas Wilkins, for his subscription-series debut this evening, has created a shorter, three-movement version he calls “Symphonic Reflections” from Symphony No. 3. Price’s life and work have recently received renewed attention, and performances of her music are becoming more and more frequent.

Duke Ellington first came to fame as a jazz innovator at New York City’s Cotton Club in the 1920s. In the following decade, he and his band pushed the boundaries of short-form jazz into the orchestral realm. The fifteen-minute A Tone Parallel to Harlem, also known as Harlem Suite or just Harlem, commissioned by NBC, was premiered in 1950 in the old Metropolitan Opera House. Adding an orchestral component to Ellington’s finely honed band, Luther Henderson’s symphonic version dates from a few years later. In his memoir Music Is My Mistress, Ellington wrote: “It is Sunday morning. We are strolling from 110th Street up Seventh Avenue, heading north through the Spanish and West Indian neighborhood towards the 125th Street business area.... You may hear a parade go by, or a funeral....”

Robert Kirzinger

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM
by Robert Kirzinger
Germeshausen Youth and Family Concerts Conductor Thomas Wilkins devised this program at the request of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, building on his work since 2011 as conductor of the BSO’s programs for young people and families, as well as his busy schedule as music director of the Omaha Symphony, principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and as a guest conductor with orchestras around the country. The works on this program, all written within the last century, reveal just the tip of the iceberg in showcasing the vast range of excellent work that lies outside the center of the Eurocentric canon.

Tonight’s concert includes four American composers whose music Maestro Wilkins has conducted on countless occasions. Featured are one of the acknowledged greats of American music, Duke Ellington; an accomplished early-20th-century symphonist, Florence Price; and two living composers: the Virginia Beach-based Adolphus Hailstork and Puerto Rican composer Roberto Sierra. Sierra’s Concerto for Saxophones and Orchestra was written for the outstanding jazz artist James Carter, who is soloist in tonight’s performance, making his BSO debut.

Adolphus Hailstork

“An American Port of Call”

THE SCORE OF “AN AMERICAN PORT OF CALL” includes three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets in A, three bassoons (third doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, two trombones and bass trombone, tuba, timpani, three percussion (snare drum, tenor drum, bass drum, two gongs, tam-tam, glockenspiel, xylophone, triangle, crash cymbals, whip, wood block), piano, and strings. The piece is ten minutes long.

Born on April 17, 1941, in Rochester, New York, Adolphus Hailstork has taught for many years at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia (conductor Thomas Wilkins’s hometown), and lives in Virginia Beach. Although this is the first time his music has been played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Pops has played the finale of his Symphony No. 1 under Charles Floyd’s direction on two occasions in Symphony Hall, in June 2005 and June 2012.

Hailstork grew up in Albany, New York. As a child attending public school there, he scored well on a musical aptitude test, which led to violin lessons. He switched to piano and organ and sang in an Episcopal church choir. As with many budding composers, his preference for invention rather than practicing the music of others was the start of his interest in composing. He started composing in earnest in high school, and the school’s orchestra director tried out some of his music with the ensemble. He also conducted a choral group. Hailstork studied music at the historically black Howard University in Washington, D.C., graduating in 1963. He worked with Nadia Boulanger at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, then enrolled at the Manhattan School of Music, where he earned a second bachelor’s degree as well as his master’s. He went on to receive his Ph.D. from Michigan State University. Hailstork taught at Michigan State, Ohio’s Youngstown State University, and Norfolk State University in Virginia before joining the faculty of Old Dominion. Following his time at the Manhattan School, he served in the U.S. Army for two years. He was stationed in Germany, where he rented a piano and was able to continue writing music. He left the service at the rank of captain.

While at Howard University, Hailstork wrote two musicals, an indication of the openness of his musical interests. His music, including An American Port of Call, is often triggered by historical or geographical narratives, frequently
those based in the American, and the uniquely African-American, experience. An early success was his orchestral work Celebration, which was commissioned by the J.C. Penney Foundation to mark the U.S. Bicentennial and recorded by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in 1976. He has worked with the DSO on several occasions; after the orchestra performed his Symphony No. 1 under Leslie Dunner’s direction, the conductor urged the DSO to offer Hailstork a commission, resulting in his Symphony No. 2 (1998). In that work, Hailstork decided to engage with the history of slavery in Africa and the United States after seeing, during a trip to Ghana, the cells in which slaves were kept prior to their being shipped to the Americas. An American Guernica is another work on a dark subject, commemorating the 1963 bombing of a Birmingham, Alabama, church during one of the country’s worst periods of racial tension. He has frequently based works on spirituals and other traditional music, as well. Along with the Detroit Symphony, ensembles that have commissioned Hailstork’s work include the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra (his Symphony No. 3); the Cincinnati May Festival; Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Kansas City Lyric Opera (which jointly commissioned his opera Joshua’s Boots), and the Cincinnati Opera Company. His music has also been performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and New York Philharmonic. In addition to orchestral music, works for chorus and for organ make up a big part of his catalog. Hailstork wrote An American Port of Call in 1984 for the Norfolk-based Virginia Symphony Orchestra, which gave the premiere in February 1985 under the direction of Richard Williams. Of his piece, the composer writes “The concert overture, in sonata-allegro form, captures the strident (and occasionally tender and even mysterious) energy of a busy American port city. The great port of Norfolk, Virginia, where I live, was the direct inspiration.” Norfolk, located on Hampton Roads Harbor at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, hosts a naval base as well as being the sixth busiest commercial port in the U.S. Hailstork’s musical portrait begins with an orchestra upsweep and brass fanfares with a touch of polynotality, moving into steady but bustling rhythms overlaid with syncopated figures. A solo clarinet emerges from the fray, playing a jazzy lick that begins to affect the rest of the orchestra. Bassoon steers the mood to a contrasting, relaxed secondary idea developed by the strings briefly before the excited music returns, ratcheting up to another level of energy. The return of the lyrical music is extended a little, again introduced by bassoon. A passage of near-stillness prepares us for the final quick crescendo.

Roberto Sierra

Concerto for Saxophones and Orchestra

IN ADDITION TO SOPRANO AND TENOR SAXOPHONE (SOLO), the score of Sierra’s Concerto for Saxophones and Orchestra calls for an orchestra of piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion (drum set, bass drum, tambourine, marimba, vibraphone, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, cabaza, gong, triangle, wood block), piano, harp, and strings. The concerto is about twenty minutes long.

Puerto Rico’s most prominent composer of concert music, Roberto Sierra—born October 9, 1953, in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico—is also one of the most frequently performed of all American composers. This stems in part from the broad range of his style, which speaks the languages of jazz, Afro-Caribbean, and a wide swath of European concert music with equal facility, whether stylistically isolated or in subtle combination. His Concerto for Saxophones and Orchestra is a case in point. He has also been incredibly prolific, writing music for an extraordinary variety of instruments, ensembles, and occasions, from tiny solo works to five symphonies, numerous concertos, and a large-scale Mass.

Sierra’s musical environment in the environs of San Juan naturally included salsa bands and other popular music, and that music has remained a part of his own language—his Sinfonía No. 3 is even subtitled La Salsa. On the classical side, the great cellist Pablo Casals established the important Casals Festival there in 1955 and lived there for decades. There are two major orchestras as well as the Puerto Rico Conservatory, where Roberto Sierra studied before attending the University of Puerto Rico. Sierra was later an administrator at both schools, serving as chancellor of the Conservatory. He has taught at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, since 1992; he now holds the title of Old Dominion Foundation Professor in the Humanities. He lives in Camillus, New York, near Syracuse. Sierra’s cosmopolitan facility of style and technique grew via studies in Europe, including time with the great avant-garde individualist György Ligeti between 1979 and 1982. This was during a time when Ligeti’s own style was changing significantly and beginning to incorporate the influence of African polyphonic drumming, his knowledge of which he credited Sierra with enriching. For his part, Sierra has employed Afro-Caribbean, South and Central American, and Spanish musical traditions, even as his treatment of instruments and the orchestra are based on European models. His approach is much in keeping with the longstanding seeding of “classical” music with folk and popular ideas in the music of Handel, Dvořák, Bartók, and Copland. 20th-century Latin American precedents include Ginastera in Argentina, Villa-Lobos in Brazil, and Chávez in Mexico, among many others.

Roberto Sierra first came to wide prominence in 1987 with the premiere of his Júbilo at Carnegie Hall in New York by the Milwaukee Symphony under Czech conductor Zden’ek Mácal. Named that orchestra’s composer-in-residence, he wrote several pieces for them, resulting in a full CD of his work in 1994. His twenty-plus concertos
include *Concierto Caribe* for flutist Carol Wincenc, a double concerto for violin and guitar with orchestra premiered by soloists Frank Peter Zimmermann and Manuel Barrueco, three percussion concertos, and many others. His *Concerto for Orchestra* was composed on commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation for the Philadelphia Orchestra’s centennial; he has also been composer-in-residence with that ensemble. His music has been commissioned and performed by many of the major orchestras in the country, and he has had a particularly strong relationship with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C., which premiered his major *Missa Latina Pro Pace* in February 2006; it was subsequently recorded by the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. The Boston Symphony Orchestra performed Roberto Sierra’s *Fandangos* in November 2012 under the direction of Giancarlo Guerrero, a consistent proponent of Sierra’s work.

Sierra wrote his *Concerto for Saxophones and Orchestra* for James Carter, whom Sierra has compared to Paganini. The two shared an artist manager, so he was more than casually aware of Carter’s career. He became fixated on the idea of writing a concerto for Carter, creating a part that allows the saxophonist to shift seamlessly between fully composed and improvised passages. The concerto was commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, which premiered it, with Carter as soloist and Neeme Järvi conducting, in October 2002. Carter plays both tenor and soprano saxophones in the piece, the latter used only in the second and third movements. The first movement begins with an orchestral flourish, then moves into a Latin rhythm under a fully notated tenor saxophone solo. Orchestral winds individually play virtuosic lines in counterpoint to the soloist, like partners in a jazz context. The first improvised opportunity for the saxophone is in a modernist, aleatoric (i.e., free) context, as the rhythmic process dissolves into chaos before regaining its bearings. An improvised cadenza allows the soloist to stretch out, and some lyrical moments begins to show the range of the music.

That lyricism is fully explored in the second movement, featuring soprano saxophone. The form of the movement is almost songlike, with a familiar chord progression. The seemingly free, highly ornamented soprano saxophone solo is fully notated in the first part. The melodic emphasis continues as the soloist switches to tenor sax, but the music, which includes solo improvisation, becomes mysterious and atmospheric in the orchestra. The last episode returns to the song-like form, and ends with an improvised solo cadenza.

The third movement is an orchestral scherzo in 3/8 time. The soloist is back to tenor sax, playing energetic, punchy lines over an orchestra alternately aggressive and delicate, but always active. The soloist switches to soprano and the music moves into a languid, bluesy feel, which remains as tenor sax returns. The scherzo idea returns to finish the movement, ending with another improvised cadenza for tenor sax. Carter will likely use this cadenza to transition to the mood of the finale, which is an irresistible homage to ’50s rock-n-roll—the rhythm tellingly similar to that of the Latin-tinged opening movement. Along with the solo part, there’s great fun in the exuberant simultaneous soloistic lines heard throughout the orchestra right up to the final joyous shout.

Florence Price

“Symphonic Reflections” from Symphony No. 3

(Florence Price)

FLORENCE BEATRICE PRICE was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on April 8, 1887, and died in Chicago, Illinois, on June 3, 1953.

THE INSTRUMENTATION OF FLORENCE PRICE’S SYMPHONY NO. 3 includes piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (tambourine, snare drum, cymbal, bass drum, triangle, crash cymbals, wood block, sand paper, castanets, slapstick, gong, orchestral bells, xylophone), celesta, harp, and strings. “Symphonic Reflections” from Symphony No. 3 is about eighteen minutes long.

Boston can boast a strong connection to the African-American composer Florence Price: after graduating as valedictorian of her high school at fourteen, she attended Boston’s New England Conservatory, where she studied organ and piano and took composition lessons with Wallace Goodrich and Frederick Converse. She also studied privately with George Whitefield Chadwick. (Converse and Chadwick were particularly prominent Boston composers; the BSO performed their work on many occasions.) Decades later, she wrote several letters to BSO conductor Serge Koussevitzky in hopes of his programming her music, but never received a reply. In the recent resurgence of interest in Price’s life and music, these letters are frequently cited to epitomize the change in her fortunes following a promising beginning to her career. Until recently, her orchestral works have rarely been performed, and this is the first BSO performance of any of her music, although BSO musicians programmed her String Quartet in chamber music concerts in spring 2017. Part of the renewed interest in Price’s work was triggered by the discovery of a trove of the composer’s music and papers in a semi-derelict house outside of Chicago in 2009. Growing up in Arkansas, Florence Smith received her first musical training from her mother. After earning her diploma in organ performance and a teaching degree for piano, she returned to Little Rock to teach. The musicologist Rae Linda Brown, in her article “Lifting the Veil: The Symphonies of Florence B. Price” (printed in the score of the Third Symphony), relates that after her father’s death in 1910, Florence moved to Indianapolis,
where she was able to pass for white because of her light skin. (Her mother was mulatto.) From there she went to Atlanta to teach at Clark University, where she proved herself a gifted administrator as well, but in 1912 she returned to Little Rock and married Thomas Price, a lawyer, with whom she had two daughters, as well as a son who died in infancy. She continued to teach piano and to compose small pieces during this time, but because of her race was barred from many professional activities. She made several trips to Chicago to advance her musical training further, and in 1927 the family moved there, where she immediately continued to teach. She also played organ in movie theaters.

In Chicago, Price’s compositions began to attract attention through competitions and publication, and in 1933 her Symphony in E minor, which won a prize in a competition sponsored by the National Association of Negro Musicians, was performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra led by Frederick Stock, becoming the first symphony by an African-American woman to be performed by a major orchestra. This was the era of the Harlem Renaissance and greater recognition of African-American cultural and intellectual accomplishment throughout the country, especially in the major cities. William Grant Still’s Symphony No. 1, *Afro-American*, for example, had been premiered in 1931; the Boston Pops Orchestra played it under Arthur Fiedler in 1937. Price was herself well aware of these currents, wrote songs based on texts by such poets as Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson, and knew Richard Wright and the poet Margaret Walker, both active in the “Chicago Renaissance.” Sadly but not atypically, her success and desire for independence seems to have created tension in her marriage; she and Thomas Price divorced in 1931. She was highly active in the National Association of Negro Musicians and in the community of artists and musicians in Chicago.

After the successful Chicago premiere, Price’s music was played by a number of other orchestras, and she was also championed by the celebrated contralto Marian Anderson, who sang Price’s arrangement of the spiritual “My Soul’s Been Anchored” at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939. Price’s Symphony No. 2 is lost, and no details are known; she seems to have written her half-hour Symphony No. 4, complete and dating from 1945, with no definite performance prospects, and it wasn’t played during her lifetime. (She had written an earlier symphony during her conservatory years.) Price’s catalog of some 300 works includes dozens of small and pedagogical pieces for piano or organ, many songs, arrangements of spirituals, choral works, and numerous works for orchestra, including the symphonies, two violin concertos, a piano concerto and a Rhapsody for piano and orchestra, and the symphony-like *Mississippi River* Suite.

Price’s Symphony No. 3, which she began writing in 1938, was commissioned by the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Music Project; it was premiered by the Detroit Civic Orchestra on November 6, 1940. Quoted by Rae Linda Brown in her aforementioned essay is Price’s description of the Third Symphony in a letter to Koussevitzky from 1945:

> I have a symphony in which I tried to portray a cross section of Negro life and psychology as it is today, influenced by urban life north of the Mason and Dixon line. It is not “program” music. I merely had in mind the life and music of the Negro of today and for that reason treated my themes in a manner different from what I would have done if I had centered my attention upon the religious themes of antebellum days, or yet the rag-time and jazz which followed; rather a fusion of these, colored by present cultural influences.

The complete work is in four movements totaling about thirty minutes. Thomas Wilkins’s “Symphonic Reflections” omits the first movement and reorders the other three to form a fast-slow-fast triptych, beginning with the quick “Juba Dance” third movement, continuing with the Andante second movement, and ending with the finale, marked Scherzo.

A Juba dance is a characteristic African-American dance featuring athletic movement and stomping. Price turned to the Juba for the third movements in all three of her extant symphonies, writing three very different takes on the dance. This rondo movement alternates high-energy episodes and slower, catch-your-breath passages. The Andante ma non troppo begins with an oboe solo playing a pentatonic melody (the folk music-tinged pentatonic scale is a frequent feature in Price’s work). The continuing melody’s color changes quickly, moving from one soloist or section to another in an approach entirely contemporary, in spite of the relatively conservative harmonic and melodic language. In its expressive directness, the music is related to Hollywood film scores of the day. The Dvořák-esque finale, in the symphony’s home key of C minor, is a scherzo, again based in a pentatonic melody, with some bluesy hues to its harmonic language. The music is powerful and driving but finely calibrated in its dynamic ebb and flow of energy.

Florence Price’s letters to Koussevitzky from the mid-1930s onward were probably triggered by the conductor’s well-known interest in American music. For whatever reason—race, gender, her conservative musical voice, or more likely a combination of these elements and others—Koussevitzky never programmed her music, in spite of some success for her works in other parts of the country, especially the Midwest. But when she died in 1953, she was planning a trip overseas, her hopes buoyed by her having become aware of strong interest in her music in Europe.
Duke Ellington
“Harlem (A Tone Parallel to Harlem),”
orchestrated by Luther Henderson

EDWARD KENNEDY “DUKE” ELLINGTON was born in Washington, D.C., on April 29, 1899, and died in New York City on May 24, 1974.

THE ORCHESTRAL SCORE OF “HARLEM” calls for three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, two alto saxophones, two tenor saxophones, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (drum set, bass drum, tom-tom, tambourine, crash cymbals, suspended cymbals, cowbell, gourd, shaker, xylophone), harp, and strings. “Harlem” is about fifteen minutes long. Duke Ellington had already begun to push the structural and expressive limitations of blues and song by the end of the 1920s, when his orchestra was the house band of the exclusive Cotton Club. The club’s all-white patronage expected not only dance numbers but also music to fill an entire evening: transitional numbers, theatrical revues, overtures, and illustrative effects such as the evocative faux-African “jungle style” that Ellington, in the U.S. anyway, helped invent. Along with such songlike hits as Mood Indigo were more extended numbers, including the seven-minute, multipart Creole Rhapsody (1931) and Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue (1937), made possible by Ellington’s exploratory harmonic language and the flexibility and creativity of his players, who included the great saxophonist Johnny Hodges and later the composer, arranger, and pianist Billy Strayhorn. Ellington and his band had begun appearing in films beginning in 1929, and in 1935 they produced the imaginative, through-composed ten-minute score for the film Symphony in Black: A Rhapsody of Negro Life. The band toured the U.S. and Europe, capitalizing on the worldwide fame of their recordings.

A measure of the public’s increasing awareness of the sophistication of jazz and its proponents was Benny Goodman’s famous 1938 concert at Carnegie Hall. Duke Ellington and his orchestra began a series of Carnegie Hall concerts in 1943, creating new, ambitious pieces commensurate with the venue, including the forty-five minute, six-part Black, Brown, and Beige, among the largest of Ellington’s conceptions. Although the history is a little vague, it seems Ellington wrote Harlem for the NBC Symphony to be included in a longer suite on the subject of New York City, which project apparently fell through. According to Ellington’s memoir, he composed it during a sea voyage from Europe to the United States in summer 1950. The piece was first performed in jazz-ensemble guise in January 1951 at the Metropolitan Opera House for an NAACP benefit. The first performance of an orchestral version took place in June 1951 at City College’s Lewisohn Stadium, with the composer conducting an orchestra made up mostly of NBC Orchestra musicians for a concert benefitting the Damon Runyon Memorial Fund for Cancer Research. Ellington and his orchestra recorded the fifteen-minute piece—with the title A Tone Parallel to Harlem (Harlem Suite) for the Columbia album “Ellington Uptown” on December 7, 1951. The orchestration used in this performance is by the formidable, Kansas City-born, Harlem-raised Luther Henderson, a musical polymath who worked with such diverse luminaries as Richard Rodgers, Victor Borge, and Liza Minelli. His orchestral versions of Ellington’s music are considered the gold standard. This Henderson arrangement was premiered by the Symphony of the Air led by Don Gillis on March 16, 1955, at Carnegie Hall.

The phrase “tone parallel” as Ellington coined it is used similarly to the way the term “tone poem” is used in general music history: the musical experience parallels the subject that Ellington is depicting. A Tone Parallel to Harlem is, then, a musical reflection of Harlem. Harlem’s varied, well-defined sections are evocations of encounters within New York City’s vibrant northern neighborhoods. The first utterance from the solo trumpet, using a plumber’s or plunger mute, evokes the word “Harlem.” In his memoir Music Is My Mistress, the composer wrote of the piece, “It is Sunday morning. We are strolling from 110th Street up Seventh Avenue, heading north through the Spanish and West Indian neighborhood towards the 125th Street business area.... You may hear a parade go by, or a funeral, or you may recognize the passage of those who are making Civil Rights demands.... Harlem has its heroes, too.... Jackie Robinson, Ray Robinson, Chief Justice Thurgood Marshall, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Bill Robinson.” In the introduction to his band’s performance of Harlem at the Armory in Washington, D.C., in April 1955, he told the audience, “[W]e plan to picture some of the major ingredients of Harlem—a little sadness, a little gladness...a lot of very handsome people who live in Harlem, endowed with great advantages.... We’re bordered on the west by the Hudson River, on the east by the East River, on the south by the Rumba Belt, and on the north by the New York Giants.... We find ourselves, along about halfway through this piece, in front of a church on Easter Sunday morning, witnessing an Easter parade, a little sadness, a little gladness, a dazzling satin doll, but moving on progressively.”

Composer/annotator ROBERT KIRZINGER is the BSO’s Associate Director of Program Publications.

To Read and Hear More...

Adolphus Hailstork’s principal publisher is Carl Fisher, which maintains website pages about the composer and his music (carlfisher.com). The brief entry in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, dating from 2001, is by the late Doris Evans McGinty, who was a musicology professor at Howard University, Hailstork’s alma mater.
There is also a Wikipedia page with an extensive works-list. Hailstork’s faculty web page at Old Dominion University includes a more extended biography than any of the above, as well as online documentation of an exhibit on the composer’s life and work created for the Old Dominion University Library, entitled “Kaleidoscope: The Musical World of Adolphus Hailstork” (http://www.lib.odu.edu/diehn/exhibitsevents/hailstorkkaleidoscope/index.htm). Finally, the useful site AfriClassical.com offers a timeline-style overview of the composer’s life.

Hailstork’s *An American Port of Call* was recorded as part of a disc of Hailstork orchestral works by conductor JoAnn Falletta and the Virginia Symphony Orchestra (Naxos, also including the composer’s Symphony No. 1 and other pieces). Among other releases, his Second and Third symphonies were recorded by David Lockington and the Grand Rapids Symphony (also Naxos); an all-Hailstork disc of choral works was recorded by Donald McCullough and the McCullough Chorale (Albany Records), and a disc of his string quartets has been recorded by the Ambrosia Quartet (also Albany).

The best place to go for information about Roberto Sierra is the composer’s own website (robertosierra.com). There is also a good Wikipedia page, as well as pages at the Cornell University Department of Music, where Sierra teaches, and at the website of his publisher, Subito Music (subitomusic.com). In early 2019, Frank Oteri interviewed Sierra for NewMusicBox, the online presence of New Music USA, the important advocacy association for American composers. That interview’s multimedia presentation can be found at https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/roberto-sierra-globalizing-local-experiences/ (or through a search engine).

Sierra’s Concerto for Saxophones and Orchestra was recorded by saxophonist James Carter, for whom it was written, with Roberto Guerrero and Sinfonia Varsovia for a disc called “Caribbean Rhapsody” (Decca). Recordings of Sierra’s major orchestral works include (all on Naxos) his Symphony No. 4 with Guerrero and the Nashville Symphony Orchestra; his Symphony No. 3, *La Salsa*, with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra led by Maximiano Valdés, and his *Missa Latina Pro Pace*, with soloists Heidi Grant Murphy and Nathaniel Webster and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Andreas Delfs. Many other recordings of Sierra’s chamber and orchestral music are available.

A website dedicated to the work of Florence Price, florenceprice.org, is maintained by the pianist and composer Karen Walwyn. There has been a recent surge of interest in Price’s life and music. The Florence Price article in The Grove Dictionary is by Rae Linda Brown, author of many other important articles on Price’s music. Among others, the Vanderbilt University-based musicologist Douglas Shadle has done major work in bringing her music back into the light. Last month, NewMusicBox.org published an important article by Shadle about Price and her work entitled “Plus ça change: Florence B. Price in the #blacklivesmatter Era.” In February 2018, the *New York Times* ran a big article by Micaela Baranello about Price, and the same month the *New Yorker’s* Alex Ross detailed the discovery of a trove of Price’s scores and papers in a semi-derelict house in St. Anne, Illinois. (Both articles can be read online.) Earlier this year, Price was profiled on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” by Tom Huizenga in January 2019. (This, too, can be found online.) A documentary about Price by James Greeson and Dale Carpenter, *The Caged Bird: The life and music of Florence B. Price*, is available on DVD (University of Arkansas Press). A WQXR radio documentary, “The Price of Admission: A Musical Biography of Florence Beatrice Price,” narrated by Terrance McKnight, is streamable via the station’s website, wxqr.org.

The only available commercial recording of Florence Price’s Third Symphony is by the Women’s Philharmonic Orchestra led by Hsu Apo, on a 2001 release that also includes her *Songs of the Oak* and the *Mississippi River Suite* (Koch International Classics). A disc of her symphonies 1 and 4 performed by John Jeter and the Fort Smith (Arkansas) Symphony Orchestra was released in January 2019 (Naxos). An earlier release by the New Black Music Repertory Ensemble conducted by Leslie Dunner featured her Symphony No. 1 (aka Symphony in E minor) and the Concerto in One Movement with piano soloist Karen Walwyn (Albany). Violinist Er-Gene Kahng recorded her two violin concertos with Ryan Cockerham and the Janáˇcek Philharmonic Orchestra (Albany Records). Some of Price’s songs and other smaller works can be found on many different compilation releases.

Duke Ellington’s memoir *Music Is My Mistress*, published originally in 1973, a year before his death, includes not only the composer’s account of his life but photographs and lists including his many honors, a discography, and a list of works (Da Capo paperback). Harvey G. Cohen’s detailed *Duke Ellington’s America* (2010) makes extensive use of the Ellington archive at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History (Oxford University Press paperback). Other Ellington biographies include Terry Teachout’s *Duke* (Gotham Books paperback), John Edward Hasse’s *Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington* (Da Capo Press paperback), and James Lincoln Collier’s *Duke Ellington* (Oxford University paperback). *The Duke Ellington Reader*, edited by Mark Tucker, collects essays by Ellington, reviews, interviews, and considerations of the composer by a wide range of authors including, among others, Ralph Ellison, Gunther Schuller, Nat Hentoff, Paul Bowles, and Billy Strayhorn (Oxford University paperback). *The Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington*, edited by Edward Green, includes essays by various authors about such topics as the historic context in which Ellington worked, public and critical reception of his music, and the nuanced relationship of his music to the jazz tradition.
partly inspired by the timeless collaboration between Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli, Mr. Carter remarks, “I feel that music equals life; that’s the way my teacher always taught me. You just can’t go through life and experience it fully with a set of blinders on. I think there’s tremendous beauty in cross-pollinations of music and influences.” The weaving together of divergent impulses is at the heart of Mr. Carter’s music. Like the late tenor sax titan Ben Webster, he is given to furious, high-velocity solos, but he is just as likely to wax sentimental, using his big, bruising tone to caress a comely melody. In 2000, he released two albums simultaneously (“Chasin’ the Gypsy” and “Layin’ in the Cut”), which together amounted to an anti-manifesto—a proclamation that everything is fair game. On “Chasin’ the Gypsy,” a voluptuous, lyrical session of Harlem, also known as Harlem and Harlem Suite, was first recorded by Duke Ellington and his band in December 1951 for the “Ellington Uptown” album (Columbia). A good recording from the April 1955 Armory concert in Washington, D.C., was released in the 1970s and reissued on CD (Squatty Roo Records, among others). The earliest recording of a symphonic version is found on Ellington’s own “Symphonic Ellington” album from 1964, featuring the Ellington orchestra performers along with the ad hoc Paris Symphony Orchestra (Reprise). Later orchestral recordings of Harlem include those by Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, using Luther Henderson’s version (EMI); JoAnn Falletta’s with the Buffalo Philharmonic (Naxos); Neeme Järvi’s with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (Chandos); Wayne Marshall conducting the SWR Big Band and Dresden Philharmonic (Hänssler Classic), and Kurt Masur leading a Wynton Marsalis arrangement with the New York Philharmonic and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra (on the Philharmonic’s own label). Also worth mentioning is “The Duke at Tanglewood,” featuring Ellington at the piano performing many of his biggest hits with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops in the Koussevitzky Music Shed on July 28, 1965. The Boston Pops-style arrangements were by Richard Hayman (RCA Red Seal).

Robert Kirzinger

Guest Artists

Thomas Wilkins

Music director of the Omaha Symphony since 2005, Thomas Wilkins is also principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and holds the Gershomusen Family and Youth Concerts Conductor Chair with the Boston Symphony Orchestra; he makes his BSO subscription series debut this evening. In August 2017, Mr. Wilkins assumed the Henry A. Upper Chair of Orchestral Conducting established by the late Barbara and David Jacobs as part of Indiana University’s “Matching the Promise” campaign. Past positions have included resident conductor of the Detroit Symphony and Florida Orchestra (Tampa Bay), and associate conductor of the Richmond (Virginia) Symphony. He also has served on the music faculties of North Park University in Chicago, the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga, and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Devoted to promoting a lifelong enthusiasm for music, Mr. Wilkins has been hailed as a master at communicating and connecting with audiences. Following his highly successful first season with the Boston Symphony, the Boston Globe named him among the “Best People and Ideas of 2011.” In 2014, he received the prestigious Outstanding Artist award at the Nebraska Governor’s Arts Awards, for his significant contribution to music in the state, and in March 2018, the Longy School of Music awarded him the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society. During his conducting career, Thomas Wilkins has led orchestras throughout the United States, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra, to both of which he returned as guest conductor in the 2016-17 season. He has also conducted the New York Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Houston Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Utah Symphony, and the National Symphony in Washington, D.C., to name a few. Following his 2015 debut at the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago, he returned in the summer of 2017. Mr. Wilkins’s commitment to community has been demonstrated by his participation on several boards of directors, including the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, the Charles Drew Health Center (Omaha), the Center Against Spouse Abuse in Tampa Bay, and, in St. Petersburg (Florida), both the Museum of Fine Arts and the Academy Preparatory Center. He currently serves as chairman of the board for the Raymond James Charitable Endowment Fund and as national ambassador for the non-profit World Pediatric Project headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, which provides children throughout Central America and the Caribbean with critical surgical and diagnostic care. A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Thomas Wilkins is a graduate of the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music and the New England Conservatory of Music. He resides with his wife Sheri-Lee in Omaha. They are the proud parents of twin daughters, Erica and Nicole.

James Carter

Saxophonist James Carter makes his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut with tonight’s performance of Roberto Sierra’s Concerto for Saxophones and Orchestra, which the composer wrote for him. “You have to be totally comfortable wherever,” says saxophonist James Carter. “I feel that music equals life; that’s the way my teacher always taught me. You just can’t go through life and experience it fully with a set of blinders on. I think there’s tremendous beauty in cross-pollinations of music and influences.” The weaving together of divergent impulses is at the heart of Mr. Carter’s music. Like the late tenor sax titan Ben Webster, he is given to furious, high-velocity solos, but he is just as likely to wax sentimental, using his big, bruising tone to caress a comely melody. In 2000, he released two albums simultaneously (“Chasin’ the Gypsy” and “Layin’ in the Cut”), which together amounted to an anti-manifesto—a proclamation that everything is fair game. On “Chasin’ the Gypsy,” a voluptuous, lyrical session partly inspired by the timeless collaboration between Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli, Mr. Carter...
assembled a thrilling group with violinist Regina Carter and Brazilian guitarist Romero Lubambo. The project was born out of some soundcheck jamming with Lubambo and Brazilian percussionist Cyro Baptista during a tour with Kathleen Battle. The groove-laden “Layin’ in the Cut,” featuring electric bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma and drummer Grant Calvin Weston (together the former rhythm section of guitarist James Blood Ulmer), combines harmolodic freedom with a deep reservoir of funk. It developed out of a project inspired by legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix. Given the wide artistic net Mr. Carter casts—from his radical takes on the organ combo (2005’s “Out of Nowhere” and 2009’s “Heaven and Earth”) to his exploration of the alt-rock band Pavement (2005’s “Gold Sounds”) to his loving tribute to Billie Holiday (2003’s “Gardenias for Lady Day”)—his creative rendezvous with composer Roberto Sierra for Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra made perfect sense. His latest project is James Carter’s Elektrik Outlet, featuring fellow Detroit artists Gerard Gibbs on electronic keyboards, Ralphe Armstrong on electric bass, and Alex White on drums, a configuration within which he has found a new groove to explore. Shifting his sax through a keen array of electronics and effects pedals just might be the perfect outlet for Mr. Carter to express the “frustrated guitarist” that he often describes himself to be. An excellent selection of tunes from Eddie Harris, Gene Ammons, Al Jarreau, Stevie Wonder, Minnie Ripperton, and others provides impetus for Carter’s Elektrik Outlet to sizzle, slide, and pop.