



STUDY GUIDE

Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet
Thursday, November 12, 2020, 10 AM EST

MOSS ARTS CENTER



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(im)migration: music of change

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Presented by the Moss Arts Center with support from Caramoor Center for the Arts and Meany Center for the Performing Arts, University of Washington



MEANY CENTER
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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

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INTRODUCTION

To start our 2020-2021 season of school programs, the Moss Arts Center is pleased to present two leading chamber ensembles, Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet, joining forces for a program highlighting the experience of migration.

Catalyst Quartet features alumni from the internationally-acclaimed Sphinx Competition, while Grammy-nominated Imani Winds leads a revolution of the wind quintet. Performing individually and together, the ensembles transform ancestral stories into music.

This guide is intended to supplement your students' experience of the program. We encourage you to use and adapt it for your teaching purposes. If you have any questions about this material or additional resources to make the most of the performance by Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet, please contact Jon at joncg@vt.edu.



WORDS TO KNOW ¹

Ancestry: a person's line of descent, which means where their family is from.

Compose: to write a piece of music.

Diaspora: a group of people settled far from their ancestral homelands.

Immigrate: to enter a country of which one is not a native for permanent residence.

Migrate: to move from one country, place, or locality to another.

¹ These definitions are drawn from merriamwebster.com.

BEFORE THE SHOW: GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What do you know about where your family comes from? What is a mystery to you about your family's history?
- Have you ever migrated to a new place? If so, where? What was the experience like for you?

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

IMANI WINDS



Brandon Patrick George, *flute*
Toyin Spellman-Diaz, *oboe**
Mark Dover, *clarinet*
Jeff Scott, *French horn**
Monica Ellis, *bassoon*

*Guest musicians Christa Robinson, oboe, and Kevin Newton, French horn, will perform in place of these members of the quintet.

Imani Winds regularly performs in prominent international concert venues, including Carnegie Hall (New York City), Lincoln Center (New York City), the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Walt Disney Hall (Los Angeles), and the Kimmel Center (Philadelphia). The ensemble's touring schedule has taken it throughout Asia, Brazil, Australia, England, New Zealand, and across Europe. Through its dynamic playing, adventurous programming, imaginative collaborations, and outreach endeavors, Imani Winds inspires audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Expanding the wind quintet repertoire by commissioning music from new voices that reflect historical events and the times in which we currently live, the ensemble's performances have featured socially-conscious music by living composers and have taken place in immigration detention centers around the country, among other venues.

The ensemble's travels through the jazz world are highlighted by its association with saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter, woodwind artist and composer Paquito D'Rivera, and pianist and composer Jason Moran. Imani Winds has six albums on Koch International Classics and E1 Music, including a Grammy Award-nominated recording, *The Classical Underground*. Imani has also recorded for Naxos and Blue Note and released Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* on Warner Classics. The group participates in residencies throughout the U.S., giving performances and master classes to thousands of students each year. The ensemble launched its annual Imani Winds Chamber Music Festival in 2010, bringing together young instrumentalists and composers from across North America and abroad for exploration and performance of the standard repertoire and newly composed chamber music. In 2016 Imani Winds received its greatest accolade in 20 years of making music—a permanent presence in the classical music section of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

[Listen to Imani Winds here.](#)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CATALYST QUARTET



Karla Donehew-Perez, *violin*

Jessie Montgomery, *violin*

Paul Laraia, *viola*

Karlos Rodriguez, *cello*

The Catalyst Quartet has toured throughout the United States and abroad, including sold-out performances at the Kennedy Center, Harris Theater (Chicago), New World Center (Miami), and Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall.

The quartet has also appeared as concerto soloists with the Bogotá Filharmonica, the Sphinx Virtuosi, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Catalyst Quartet has held concert residencies at the University of Michigan, University of Washington, Rice University, Houston's Society for the Performing Arts, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the Virginia Arts Festival, and Pennsylvania State University. The quartet has performed and taught master classes at international residencies such as the In Harmony Project in England, the University of South Africa, and the Teatro de Bellas Arts in Cali, Colombia.

The quartet's recordings span the scope of its interests and artistry. Its debut album *The Bach/Gould Project* features the members' own arrangement of Bach's monumental *Goldberg Variations* paired with Glenn Gould's seminal String Quartet, op. 1. The quartet can also be heard on *Strum*, violinist Jessie Montgomery's debut album; *Bandoneon Y Cuerdas*, tango-inspired music for string quartet and bandoneon by JP Jofre; and *Dreams and Daggers*, Cécile McLorin Salvant's Grammy-winning album that features the Catalyst Quartet in a unique musical role.

[Listen to Catalyst Quartet here.](#)

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

What pieces will the ensembles play in this concert?

The special school-time matinee includes Imani Winds performing an arrangement by Jeff Scott of Astor Piazzolla's *Libertango*, while the Catalyst Quartet performs the final movement *Saltando como um Saci/ Allegro* from Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos' String Quartet no. 1. The ensembles join together for a movement titled *Lay Dis Body Down* from the new work *Sergeant McCauley*, composed by Catalyst violinist Jessie Montgomery.

Composer Highlight

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992) was an Argentinian composer, best known for applying elements of tango—a genre previously heard largely in dance halls—to classical composition. The result, termed *nuevo tango*, introduced sudden rhythmic changes, complex harmonies, and silky melodies that drew from the popular South American dance form. This angered some people who felt it violated the rules of traditional classical music, but delighted many more, solidifying Piazzolla's place in history as one of the 20th century's most influential composers.² [Visit this link](#) to hear Piazzolla's *Libertango*, performed by the Moscow City Symphony with live dancers.

Did you know?

Jessie Montgomery performed at the Moss Arts Center with the Sphinx Virtuosi in 2013, and one of her compositions was featured in Dance Theatre of Harlem's performance of *Passage* at the Moss in 2019.

Inside the Piece: *Sergeant McCauley*

Sergeant McCauley tracks the journey of composer and performer Jessie Montgomery's great-grandfather during the Great Migration. It strings together spirituals and work songs that reflect Sergeant McCauley's route from Mississippi to the West, then up north, and eventually back to Georgia. The special textures of this mix of strings and winds transforms the stories and their reflections into music.

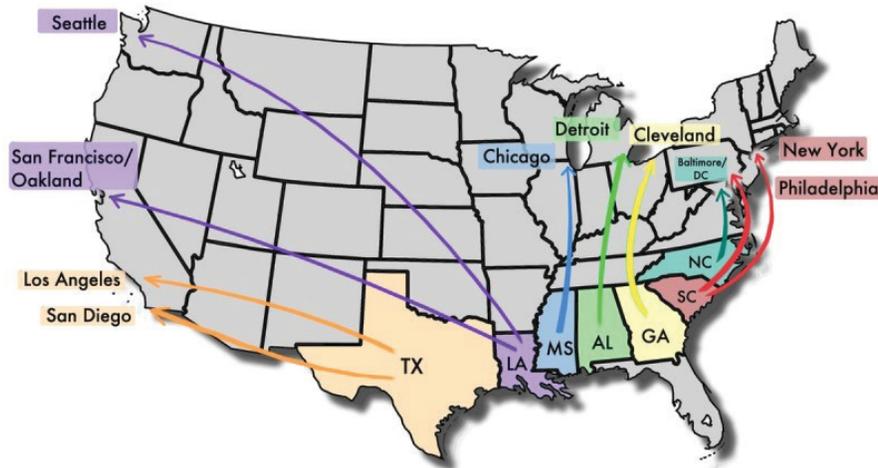
² Huey, Steve. "Astor Piazzolla." AllMusic, AllMusic, www.allmusic.com/artist/astor-piazzolla-mn0000607967/biography.

WHAT WAS THE GREAT MIGRATION?

"In the United States, a large number of African Americans moved from the South to the North and West during the 20th century, particularly during World Wars I and II. This large-scale relocation is called the Great Migration. In 1900 the vast majority of African Americans lived in the Southern states. From 1916 to 1970, during the Great Migration, about six million Black Southerners relocated to other parts of the country. Most of the migrants moved from rural communities to large cities.

The Geography of the Great Migration

The Migration of African Americans from the American South (1910-1970)



"In every migration, certain conditions motivate people to leave an area; these are known as *push factors*. Other conditions, the *pull factors*, attract people to the new area. In the Great Migration, the push factors included poor economic conditions in the South. After the American Civil War, slavery was ended in 1865. Lacking both money and land, many freed Southern Blacks became sharecroppers, renting farmland from white landowners by paying them a portion of their crops. The sharecropping system required grueling labor and supplied very low incomes. Between 1910 and 1920, an already severe economic depression in Southern agriculture worsened. Crops were damaged by floods and insects, notably the boll weevil, and farms failed. Impoverished Blacks began migrating away from the South in great numbers.

"Another important factor that pushed African Americans to leave the South was ongoing racial oppression. The great majority of Southern whites remained fiercely opposed to African American political, civil, and social equality. The Southern states used a variety of means to keep Blacks from voting. So-called Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation in the South, preventing African Americans from using buses, schools, restaurants, theatres, and other facilities reserved for whites.

"The pull factors in the Great Migration included encouraging reports of good living conditions and jobs with good wages in the North and West. Starting in the late 19th century, large numbers of Europeans had moved to the United States. In the 1920s a series of laws greatly decreased this immigration. As a result, urban industries were faced with labor shortages. An even greater number of jobs became available in the cities during World War I and World War II, when defense industries required more unskilled labor. Large numbers of African Americans moved to the Northern cities to seek employment. Although the Great Migration slowed during the Great Depression, it surged again after World War II, when rates of migration were high for several decades.

"News of the better conditions for Blacks in the North and West spread by word of mouth and by reports and advertisements in African American newspapers. The influential Black newspaper the *Chicago Defender*, for example, became one of the leading promoters of the Great Migration. In addition to Chicago, Illinois, other cities that absorbed large numbers of Black migrants included Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; and New York, New York.

Inside the Piece, continued

"Seeking better civil and economic opportunities, many Blacks were not wholly able to escape racism by migrating to the North. African Americans there were segregated into ghettos, and urban life introduced new obstacles. Newly arriving migrants even encountered social challenges from the Black establishment in the North, which tended to look down on the 'country' manners of the newcomers."³

IN HER OWN WORDS

What does composer Jessie Montgomery say about the piece?

"Music is my connection to the world," says violinist and composer Jessie Montgomery, and her [pieces] bear witness to the visceral truth of that claim. Montgomery's music is rooted in her classical training, popular styles, improvisation, and storytelling. Montgomery's mother is an actor and playwright who has created numerous theatre pieces rooted in her family history, "So I've been witness to that all of my life," she says. "That [belief] has found its way into my music." Montgomery's tone poem *Records from a Vanishing City* (2016), composed for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, recounts her childhood on Manhattan's Lower East Side during an artistically vibrant time. More broadly probing her African American heritage is *Five Slave Songs* (2018), commissioned for soprano Julia Bullock by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Sergeant McCauley similarly draws from Montgomery's personal history. [Written especially] for wind quintet and string quartet, the work is inspired by the Great Migration, the movement of more than six million African Americans over the early- and mid-20th century from the rural south to urban centers across the United States. The work specifically tracks the journey of Montgomery's great-grandfather, the Sergeant McCauley after whom the work is titled: a *buffalo soldier* who migrated northward before ultimately returning south to Mississippi. Montgomery's reconstruction of his journey is based as much on research (military records documenting his travels, etc.) as on family lore, nurtured in conversation with her mother and aunt.

What was a buffalo soldier? "Buffalo soldiers were African American soldiers who mainly served on the Western frontier following the American Civil War. In 1866 six all-Black cavalry and infantry regiments were created after Congress passed the Army Organization Act. Their main tasks were to help control the Native Americans of the Plains, capture cattle rustlers and thieves, and protect settlers, stagecoaches, wagon trains, and railroad crews along the Western front."⁴

Like a sound map of Sergeant McCauley's travels, Montgomery's score makes use of African American spirituals and work songs that would have been heard in the locales he likely passed. Sergeant McCauley's five movements [point] to these songs, each representing a stop along the way.

The work's final movement, *Lay Dis Body Down*, cites a funeral song said to originate from the region surrounding South Carolina, and represents Sergeant McCauley's final resting place. Montgomery sets the song as a slow, meditative procession.⁵

³ "Great Migration." *Britannica Kids*, Encyclopedia Britannica, kids.britannica.com/students/article/Great-Migration/603604. Accessed 14 Sept. 2020.

⁴ "Buffalo Soldiers." *History*, A&E Television Networks, 5 Aug. 2020, history.com/topics/westward-expansion/buffalo-soldiers. Accessed 14 Sept. 2020.

⁵ Castillo, Patrick. "JESSIE MONTGOMERY, Sergeant McCauley (2019)." *Music Accord*, Music Accord, 2019, musicaccord.org/sub_page_works.htm?Sergeant-McCauley-40. Accessed 14 Sept. 2020.

ACTIVITIES

FAMILY INTERVIEWS

Invite students to interview their parents, grandparents, or caregivers about their families' histories.

Suggested questions include:

- Where is our family from?
- What influence has that had on your life?
- What traditions has our family passed down over the years?

After conducting the interviews, invite students to share what they learned with their classmates.

Teacher's note: It's important to recognize that some families' histories are unknown to them, sometimes as a consequence of their ancestors having been forcibly removed from Africa and enslaved or—in the case of Native Americans—attacked, displaced, and compelled to abandon their cultural traditions. Remain sensitive to this fact that may pertain to your students, engage in thoughtful conversation about this painful history, and/or adapt the activity with the students as you see fit.

SONG STUDY

Ask students to research one of the pieces from Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet's program, and present on what they learned. They might consider:

- When the song was written.
- Important historical events that occurred during that time period.
- Biographical information about the composer.
- The composer's reasons and inspiration for writing the song. For instance, the composer may have written the song in honor of a particular person or in response to an historical event.
- The style of music in which the song is written and historical influences of that style. ⁶

⁶ With gratitude, these suggested details are drawn from "School Matinee Series Study Guide." *Imani Winds*, 2019, hop.dartmouth.edu/sites/hop.prod/files/hop/imaniwinds-studyguide-web-new.pdf.

After the Show: Guiding Questions

- What parts of the performance did you enjoy, not enjoy, and have questions about? Why?
- Describe some similarities and differences among the pieces that Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet played. What did the pieces remind you of? Describe such elements of the music and performance as rhythm, melodies, harmonies, tempo, dynamics, texture, and instruments.
- In the question-and-answer discussion with the musicians after the performance, what did you hear that surprised you? What do you still have questions about?

Virginia Standards of Learning

Imani Winds and Catalyst Quartet's program connect with the following Virginia Standards of Learning:

General Music

4.3: a, c, g; 4.6: c
5.3: c, e
6.3; 6.4; 6.5; 6.6: b
7.3; 7.4; 7.5 7.6: b, c
8.3; 8.4; 8.5

History

USII.3: a, b
USII.4: a, b, c, d
USII.6: b, c

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