



presenting
AfroClassical Composers

December Happenings

A Season of Gratitude, Humility and Empowerment

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For your listening enjoyment..

This is how our mission looks in action - a sample follows:



If you think you don't have much money to give, then donate \$1. And you'll have made an important difference that could ripple across the globe.

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Presenting... Update: Progress and Developments

Save the date for our next live event!



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Strictly Strings

featuring works for sting quartet, quintet and string orchestra by

**Diane White-Clayton, Gregory T. S. Walker,
Florence Price and Fela Sowande**

Sunday 18 February 2024 | 2–5 PM

Los Angeles Central Library
630 W 5th St
Mark Taper Auditorium



*Free to the public
Donations welcome*

Origin Story

We use this space to acknowledge and remember Lyn McLain.

Who is Lyn McLain? ... you might be asking.

To appreciate his life and work, his vision, you'd need to know about decades of young students, beginning in the '60s who traveled from their local school communities across different quadrants and walks of life in the nation's capital, to meet and play instruments together, making music on Saturday mornings (and Wednesday nights).

Without awareness of huge controversy, young students were part of a larger national development that began only a few years after the 1954 Supreme Court's Brown vs Board of Education Decision that "desegregated" public schools. Lyn McLain's job and vision was to create a city-wide program that brought together students from a school system he described as having "two of each." He was referring to the racial segregation where there were schools serving the Black population and another set with a primarily White population.

In 1970 when my peers and I were in that D.C. Youth Orchestra Program we were invited to and performed in the St Moritz International Youth Orchestra Festival in Switzerland. The year before, the Oakland Youth Orchestra had participated, representing the U.S. Their music is documented on LP recordings.

In the wisdom and awareness of an early fortysomething, hippy-looking, Ithica College graduate, Lyn McLain reasoned, "I can't take this heavily Black population of young musicians to Europe and play only European music." Washington, D.C. was some 70% Black-populated then. Prior to 1963, the city's mayor was appointed by the President of the U.S. – not elected by its citizens. Lyn McLain decided that we (Black and White students) needed to know and include in our performances during our travel to Europe, music by Black classical composers. And we did.

We learned and played works by George Walker – who in 1996 became the first Black to win a Pulitzer Prize in Music Composition. We played compositions by Hale Smith, William Dawson, Beethoven, Schubert, Stravinsky, Offenbach and others, not just for the tour, but as part of a broad orchestral repertoire. In Switzerland, we also performed a symphony by Howard Hanson, a U.S. classical composer of European heritage, who had served as Director of the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester.

In our formative years, my peers and I, in addition to generations following, knew and demonstrated how inclusion looks/sounds in talent on the stage (personnel), and in the repertoire we performed as musicians. In turn, we played for inclusive audiences – even as the South African Youth Orchestra (where Apartheid was still in effect) had issues with "Blacks" and "Whites" performing together on the same stage during the St. Moritz International Youth Orchestra Festival. How instructive for teenagers learning firsthand about global affairs!

To Lyn McLain, we salute your leadership, vision, your courage, humility as well as care you imparted tirelessly. And to the parents, teachers, faithful donors and communities of supporters throughout Washington, D.C. (and in other cities who practiced inclusiveness), we at *Presenting...* salute your work and carry on your vision during this season of Thanksgiving. [Lyn McLain died at age 95, in November 2023.](#)

Warmly,

Michael Ligon...
Executive/Artistic Director

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