



presenting AfroClassical Composers

June Happenings

2023 continues to bring exciting and engaging developments in the world of classical music. We are delighted to offer you an inside look here:

Living composer/pianist, BLK

BOK performed at our very first fundraiser at the home of Anne Keeler in Pacific Palisades, last September - 2022. What a treat and embodiment of excellence! Venue and sample music/audio follow for your listening at this [link](#).

He will appear at **The Sun Rose** 8430 Sunset Blvd, West Hollywood, CA 90069, USA on **June 8th**. BOK's technical precision, artistic expression and musicianship combined with an unpretentious, affable and humble personality make him a true professional of enormous talent. In your city, please attend and support his brilliant artistry; he supports *Presenting...*



The 2023 Pulitzer Prize in Music is awarded for the opera Omar by Rhiannon Giddens (music and libretto) and Michael Abels (music). The opera has been touring the country. Excerpts will be performed at the Ojai Music Festival in California this June, where Ms. Giddens is the Music Director this year.

Is Beethoven Black?...the question recently posed by a reader.

Many biographical sources on Beethoven, including the dramatic film *Immortal Beloved* (based on his life), corroborate the fact that



Ludwig Van Beethoven's father was a Moor, a term used in Europe to distinguish those of Andalusians and/or African Descent, including the Mauritians, Berbers and other North Africans living in Europe. The Moor's influence is seen in the Arabesques of Spanish architecture.

In U.S. laws, history and customs, if one parent is of African Descent (and Africa is quite a large continent with a rich array of cultures, customs, religions and peoples); then the offspring is "Black." Note: *Presenting...* refers to African descriptor to define the origins of composers,

rather than the term Black - essentially a code used to distinguish skin color (which it really does not). The term Black also historically codes a construct - race. If that doesn't ring true, recall the confusing and limiting options for identifying oneself on the last U. S. Census form. Is it one's country/nation, one's skin, one's religion or something else that defines a group from another? Invariably, race is used as code in societies as basis for advantaging one group over another.

The term "Black" - Noir in French, is used in legal documents (codes) of the 17th century, signed by Louis XIV, King of France, to enforce distinctions of social/economic class and privilege. In practice, the distinctions extended to England and other countries, Citations follow:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Moor-people>

<https://worldhistorycommons.org/code-noir-black-code>

Why discuss **History, race and Music?**

Context Is Everything.

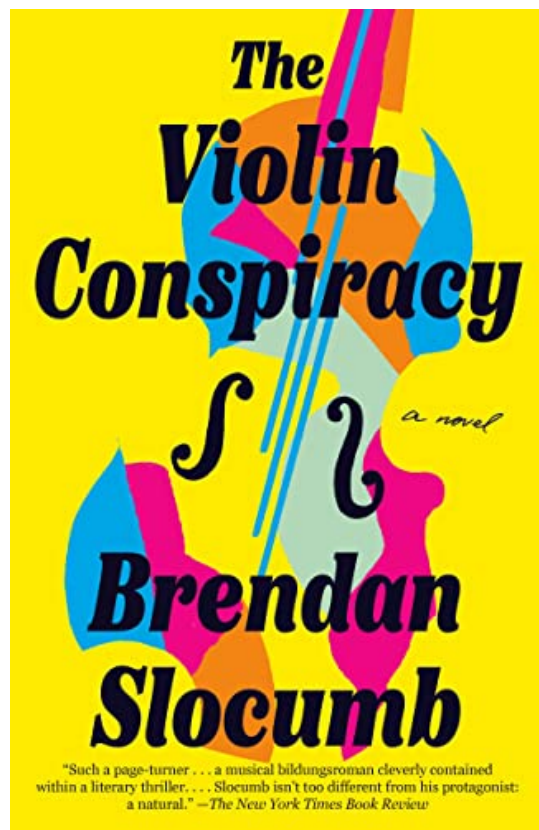
Presenting... starts with the premise/reality that **composers do not create in a vacuum**. To give context to composers, the music they create; it is insightful and essential to appreciate the conditions and inspiration for what the composer is expressing with music.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *Omar*, for example, is a story about a well-educated Fulani (one of the largest groups of people scattered throughout the Sahel and West Africa), who had studied the Qur'an intensely. Omar was enslaved in the U. S. His story of religious knowledge, language and culture is epic and enlightening, in the face of an oppressive system that forced Roman Catholic and Christian religion on all enslaved,.

In this current age of banning books, thoughts, bodily autonomy, truth and cultures, what will follow? - Burning books AGAIN, to expunge what does not match a singular perspective? *Now more than ever, we cannot simply erase from the global repertoire in classical music - and from our cultural awareness and embrace - the brilliant works of George Walker, Florence Price, Joseph Bologne (aka Chevalier of St Georges), Vicente Lusitano, William Grant Still, Tania Leon.....* that enrich the canon of classical music. Composers document the times in which they live, reflect upon; offering a record of culture and society in art forms that are healing and as essential to the human well-being as are food, air & water, shelter and other components of living. Can you imagine a society without music?

The Violin Conspiracy

A great read: Brendan Slocumb's *The Violin Conspiracy* – a mystery! More about the book [here](#).



Presenting... Update: Progress and Developments



To our talented intern at *Presenting...*, **Elizabeth Knoll**, we say Thank You and Congrats. From September 2022 – April 2023, Lizzie was instrumental and essential to our successful, first ever fundraiser and our inaugural, live event in December 2022. Lizzie's degree: Master's in Public Health (MPH). Much success, happiness, Lizzie!

For a little humor, look for the roll out of our **Elite Mug Shot Society Project** – a unique marketing initiative. You'll smile as you engage!

Click on the share buttons below, and help broaden our reach.

Enthusiastically with respect,

Michael Ligon

Executive/Artistic Director

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