



The Sixty-sixth Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin  
Concerts

National Gallery of Art  
2,661st Concert

Celeste Headlee, *soprano*  
Danielle DeSwert, *pianist*

Presented in honor of African American History Month

February 27, 2008  
Wednesday Afternoon, 12:10 pm  
West Building Lecture Hall

*Admission free*

## Program

Music by William Grant Still (1895–1978)

*Brown Baby* (1923)

Lyrics by Paul Henry

*Lis'en to de Lams* (1937)

Traditional

*Winter's Approach* (1926)

Text by Paul Laurence Dunbar

*The Breath of a Rose* (1926)

Text by Langston Hughes

*'Tis Sunset in the Garden*

From the opera *Troubled Island* (1938)

Text by Langston Hughes

*Songs of Separation* (1946)

*Idolatry*

Text by Arna Bontemps

*Poeme*

Text by Philippe Thoby-Marcelin

*Parted*

Text by Paul Laurence Dunbar

*If You Should Go*

Text by Countee Cullen

*A Black Pierrot*

Text by Langston Hughes

*Bayou Home* (1944)

Text by Verna Arvey

*Golden Days*

From the opera *Costaso* (1949)

Text by Verna Arvey

*Grief* (1953)

Text by Leroy V. Brant

*Citadel* (1956)

Text by Virginia Brasier

*Two Loves*

From the opera *Minette Fontaine* (1958)

Text by Verna Arvey

*Here's One* (1941)

Traditional

## The Musicians

### **CELESTE HEADLEE**

Celeste Headlee was valedictorian of the graduating class of 1987 at the Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts in Greensboro, North Carolina. She earned a bachelor of music degree in vocal performance at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona, graduating with honors in 1993, and a master of music degree in vocal performance from the University of Michigan, where she studied with Freda Herseth, Leslie Guinn, and George Shirley, and took several courses in song interpretation with Martin Katz. While in Arizona, Headlee was a member of the Artist Roster for the Arizona Commission on the Arts. She has given performances for the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies (Little Rock), Colorado College (Colorado Springs, Colorado), the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Distinguished Artist Series at the Church of the Red Rocks (Sedona, Arizona), Wayne State University (Detroit, Michigan), and Yavapai College (Prescott, Arizona), among many other locations. She has also performed with the Great Lakes Lyric Opera, the Harlequin Players (Olympia, Washington), the Michigan Opera Theatre, the Sedona Arts Center, the Sedona Repertory Company, and many other professional companies.

For more than fifteen years Headlee has performed and lectured on the music of her grandfather, William Grant Still, in both concerts and recitals. She was also the editor of the second edition of the book, *William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, for which she compiled the first complete thematic catalogue of Still's works. She also sang his *Levee Land* on the CD *Music of Afro-American Composers*, produced by the Northern Arizona University Wind Symphony.

Since 1999, Headlee has been a journalist for public radio. Her news reports have aired on the Great Lakes Radio Consortium, National Native News, NPR, the Pacifica Network, and PRI. A winner of numerous awards for her features and spot reporting, she also serves as a mentor and managing editor for NPR's Next Generation Project, which is aimed at training young broadcast journalists.

**DANIELLE DESWERT**

Brussels-born pianist Danielle DeSwert is a freelance collaborative pianist and coach in Washington, DC, and the music program specialist at the National Gallery of Art. She has worked as a pianist and coach with the Ash Lawn Highland Opera Festival, Chautauqua Opera, Indianapolis Opera, Kentucky Opera, the New Orleans Opera Association, Portland (Oregon) Opera, San Francisco Opera Center, Sarasota Opera, and the Washington National Opera, and from 2004–2006 she was the principal repetiteur with the Baltimore Opera Company and Washington Concert Opera.

She performs regularly in chamber music and in voice and piano recitals, including performances at the Arts Club of Washington, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, the Kennedy Center, the Mexican Institute of Culture, the National Gallery of Art, the Russian Embassy, and at the White House. She is the principal pianist of the Inscape Chamber Music Project.

DeSwert holds a master of music degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she studied with Martin Katz, and a bachelor of music degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Additionally, she studied with Warren Jones and Anne Epperson at the Music Academy of the West, and was an apprentice coach with the Washington Opera, working with Plácido Domingo.

## Program Notes

William Grant Still is known as the “dean of African American composers” and one of the country’s most celebrated figures in music, regardless of ethnic background. He was born on May 11, 1895, in Woodville, Mississippi, but moved shortly thereafter to Little Rock, Arkansas. He attended Wilberforce University and the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music before moving to New York to launch his musical career. There, he found success as an arranger and orchestrator, writing for W. C. Handy, Willard Robison, Artie Shaw, Sophie Tucker, Don Voorhees, and Paul Whiteman. Still also studied with George Chadwick and ultra-modernist Edgard Varèse. A prolific composer, Still wrote more than 150 works, including symphonies, ballets, operas, chamber pieces, and vocal works.

Still opened many doors for minorities in the classical music realm. He was the first African American to have a symphony performed by a major symphony orchestra in the United States, the first to conduct a major symphony orchestra in this country, the first to conduct a major symphony orchestra in the deep South, and the first to conduct a radio orchestra in New York City, at a time when that industry was divided along racial lines. He was also the first African American to have an opera produced by a major company in the United States (in 1949 his *Troubled Island* was presented at the City Center of Music and Drama in New York City). In 1981 *A Bayou Legend* was the first opera by an African American to be televised over a national network.

*Program notes by Celeste Headlee*

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

**Washington National Cathedral Choir of Men and Girls**

Music by Allegri, Domenico Scarlatti, and Tallis

March 2, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court



**Women of the National Gallery Vocal Arts Ensemble**

Music by Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, Clara Schumann,  
Hildegard von Bingen, and others

Presented in honor of Women's History Month

March 5, 2008

Wednesday, 12:10 pm

West Building Lecture Hall

For the convenience of concertgoers  
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the  
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,  
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of  
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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