



Davóne Tines, *bass-baritone*
and Adam Nielsen, *pianist*

“RECITAL NO. 1: MASS”

PROGRAM

KYRIE

“Kyrie”

Caroline Shaw
(b. 1982)

“Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen”
from *Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust*, BWV 170

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685 - 1750)

Songs for Death

- I. after Were You There?
- II. after Sweet Little Jesus Boy
- III. after Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Tyshawn Sorey
(b. 1980)

AGNUS DEI

“Agnus Dei”

Caroline Shaw
(b. 1982)

“Komm süßes Kreuz”
from *St. Matthew Passion*, BWV 244

J.S. Bach
(1685 - 1750)

“To a Brown Girl, Dead”

Margaret Bonds
(1913 - 1972)

CREDO

“Credo”

Caroline Shaw
(b. 1982)

“Mache dich, mein Herze, rein”
from *St. Matthew Passion*, BWV 244

J.S. Bach
(1685 - 1750)

“Give Me Jesus”

Moses Hogan
(1957 - 2003)

GLORIA

"Gloria"	Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)
"Quia fecit mihi magna" from <i>Magnificat in D</i> , BWV 243	J.S. Bach (1685 - 1750)
"My Good Lord Done Been Here"	Moses Hogan (1957 - 2003)

SANCTUS

"Sanctus"	Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)
"Amazing Grace"	arr. Davóne Tines (b. 1986)
"Prelude to the Holy Presence of Joan D'Arc"	Julius Eastman (1940 - 1990)

BENEDICTUS

"VIGIL"	Igee Dieudonné (b. 1991)
	arr. Davóne Tines (b. 1986)

*The works on this program by **Caroline Shaw** and **Tyshawn Sorey** were commissioned by Vocal Arts DC to be performed by Davóne Tines and are made possible in part by very generous contributions from Richard J. Price and Yung Chang, R.V. McKay and The Howard and Sarah D. Solomon Foundation*

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

*An Interview with Davóne Tines
by Fergus McIntosh*

FM: You've chosen an unconventional format for your Carnegie Hall debut [or another presenter]. Why?

DT: This recital has technically been about four years in the making, and it's involved a lot of exploration. It took me a long time to get to the point of wanting to give a traditional performance standing in the crook of a piano. I approached the recital situation with a sort of a phobia, or an allergic reaction to doing what I think I've seen a lot of singers do, which is to program something based off of a model that they aren't fully engaged in, filling in the template with music that simply checked boxes and didn't articulate their own feelings and experience in an explicit way. I think this idea of explicit context is critical: in order to perform well, these things need to be in the front of your mind, for every single note.

FM: This program is structured around Christian liturgy. Is that your explicit context?

DT: It's definitely part of it. There's always been a prominent religious thread through my music making. As a child, singing was all religious or liturgical, and all in a choral setting, with close family and friends. Everyone in my family participated in choir, including my grandfather, who was in the Navy for thirty years and now directs two church choirs. He's the one who noticed I had a unique voice and thought that I should do something further to develop it and figure it out. In high school, I did musicals, and in college at Harvard I sang in a choir and conducted an a cappella group—we did a lot of Renaissance polyphony, which was a bit nerdy even for Harvard, but really fun at the time. And then, before and during grad school, I had church choir jobs, first at the Catholic National Shrine in Washington, and then at the Greek Orthodox cathedral here in New York. So, I've had this long association with being able to support myself through music making, which is part of the larger musical tradition in terms of musicians, like Bach, being connected to and patronized by the church, especially in the Baroque period. In some ways, my involvement in music is just a continuation of that larger world tradition.

FM: I once heard you sing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," and follow it up with Lauryn Hill's rendition of the hymn "Joyful, Joyful" from *Sister Act 2*. What draws them together?

DT: Well, in that case it's really the same music! But my actual lived experience with liturgical music has had all of these flavors, so this recital is an opportunity for me to put all of that in one place and kind of have that conversation in front of people. It also very much dictates the interpretative choices I'll make. I want to unify the aesthetic through which I perform, and that might lead to some choices within Bach that are very nonstandard, like certain glissandi or certain ways of emphasizing phrases that are not from the traditional performance practice. I've really enjoyed being able to approach gospel singing with a classical technique as well. It allows a whole different variety of color options.

FM: You came to singing, as a profession, relatively late, and you've risen quickly. How has that experience shaped your musicianship?

DT: Leaving Harvard, I didn't know how to make a career in performing and it wasn't exactly my focus. So I worked in arts administration in a really intensive way for a lot of different organizations. That was an extremely valuable experience because it taught me all the different angles of how music is made, artistically and professionally, and also how it's supported administratively. Seeing the inner workings of how things actually were moved from conception to reality really galvanized my thought around what I now refer to as creative pragmatism: being excited about having an idea, and very clearly knowing the path to bring that idea to fruition. I think that extended experience was very much a part of why I've become a maker as well as a musician.

FM: You've made some amazing things—but we almost missed out on hearing you sing!

DT: In the end I kind of dared myself to audition for Yale and Juilliard. If I got into either of those, that's what I would do, and if I didn't, then I would apply to business school. I didn't get into Yale, for the second time—they rejected me in undergrad as well—but I did get into Juilliard. Then at Juilliard, I spent a lot of time trying to truthfully justify and wrap my head around why I was singing certain repertoire, certain German lieder or what have you. There was this disconnect between my sense of self and the idea that I would be trying to present a story of, you know, falling in love with some maiden that had shunned me and then dying in agony. I didn't feel a direct connection to that. I wanted a one-to-one relationship between my own experience and what I was putting out in front of people. Now I think in order to inhabit a role that someone has created, or to perform something as a kind of vessel or a tool of a composer, you have to identify the differences between yourself and the piece. It's only once those have been explicitly explored and understood that you can see the connections.

FM: I'm guessing that you do feel a direct connection to the music you're singing here.

DT: Just as "The Black Clown"—the show I created with composer Michael Schachter and director Zack Winokur, who I consider my art husband—was an articulation of the African American experience, this program serves as an exploration of my own connection to spirituality.

FM: Do you conceive of your "MASS" as a dramatic project?

DT: I conceive of every single appearance that I make as being of a dramatic ilk, because I think the ultimate goal of music making, period, is storytelling. That's how society holds a mirror up to itself and sees what it is. Everything that I think is successful in terms of human engagement has to deal with narrative. So, figuring out the underpinning dramaturgy, figuring out what the story is, and basing the explication of the music on top of that is essential. I do that sort of thinking for every single performance.

FM: You've named the sections of your recital after parts of the mass, but you've changed the order. Why is that?

DT: My great friend and colleague Gus Chrysson—who directed that Greek Orthodox choir and then ended up becoming an Episcopal priest—told me that I'm basically queering the mass, queering in the broad sense of bending it to my own understanding. So, the order I'm using here, and which Caroline Shaw has followed in her miniature mass, accords with my own understanding of a spiritual journey, beginning with the Kyrie, which begs for mercy, and then the Agnus Dei, which represents the possibility for change, but only through death. There's the affirmation of the Credo and the exaltation of the Gloria, with Bach's "Quia Fecit," which I've sung many times, and which is so full of ecstatic wonder and excitement. The Sanctus is a moment of meditation. And then the Benedictus has this very simple text, "Where there is darkness, he will bring light." That's the entire recital right there: present the darkness and show the change into light.

FM: How did that blessing, the piece you've called "Chorale," come about?

DT: I was in Amsterdam this past fall and Igge Dieudonné and I just fell into this mode of having exploratory sessions, very late into the evening, where we would kind of set a style and improvise from there. "Chorale" came out of an exploration of Faure. When Igge started to play, those were the first words that came to mind, along with this extremely simple melody, which to me is a combination of Faure and gospel music. It was a kind of transcendent moment.

FM: Do you believe in God? What does God mean to you?

DT: I believe in God, definitely. I think it's very complicated. The African-American connection to Christianity is very complex because it's essentially a religion that was forcibly introduced to a population of people that had their own beliefs systems and history and spiritual lore. That's been a part of my own journey, understanding what it means for Black people to engage with a religious system that was essentially colonized upon them. What I've realized is that the way that I, and the way that I think a lot of Black people, engage with the Christian ideals is in the realm of metaphor. And that's connected to my own music making: I'm utilizing these ideas or paradigms that people can understand symbolically, and attaching personal experience to them.

FM: Is that why the new work Tyshawn Sorey has written for you is titled "Songs of Death"?

DT: It's a setting of three familiar spirituals, but on the score Sorey writes that he has "re-composed" the tunes. I had this realization that a lot of spirituals are essentially code for suicide notes. "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," for example, is someone begging God to kill them, to "carry me home." There's a very important Langston Hughes poem called "Suicide's Note," just one line. It says:

"The calm,
Cool face of the river
asked me for a kiss."

Hughes, in his time, directly connected to the possibility of these spirituals being suicidal, and I really wanted to show audiences another side of these songs. I think a lot of times spirituals are misunderstood, heard as happy songs or being just about praising the Lord or what have you. But these are songs that were created by people in extraordinary circumstances, and they're amazing, metaphorical expressions of real faith. Sorey's task was to break the songs out of the aesthetic that we understand them within, so that the text and the ideas behind the text could become more apparent.

FM: Do you think that standard interpretation of spirituals, the way that they've been positioned in society, is oppressive?

DT: Yes, because it lobs off the more detailed and faceted reality of these pieces, these artifacts, and life doesn't work that way: you can't really engage with something just on one plane. I'm inspired by the Julius Eastman piece I'm singing, which connects ideals of revolution across the centuries, between a twentieth-century, Black, gay composer and Joan of Arc. She's visited by the saints—there's an incredible painting of this in the Metropolitan Museum by Jules Bastien-Lepage, by the way—and they tell her, "Joan, when they question you, speak boldly."

FM: The power of declamation.

DT: Exactly. And what I have to say, the experience I have to share, has been comprised of all of these things: early music, Bach, contemporary gospel, and also new music. When you put these seemingly different things together and acknowledge the connections between them, you have to acknowledge that there's something shared among these composers. There's something that is shared among all people.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Texts and translations have been supplied to Vocal Arts DC by the artist's management, and have not been edited or altered in any way

Caroline Shaw: "Kyrie"

Text from the Mass ordinary

Kyrie eleison	Lord have mercy
Christe eleison	Christ have mercy
Kyrie eleison	Lord have mercy

J.S. Bach: "Wie jammern mich" from *Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust*, BWV 170

Text by Georg Christian Lehms (1684 - 1717)

Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen, Die dir, mein Gott, so sehr zuwider sein; Ich zittre recht und fühle tausend Schmerzen, Wenn öies ich nur an Rach und Hass erfreun. Gerechter Gott, was magst du doch gedenken, Wenn sie allein mit rechten Satansränken Dein scharfes Strafgebot so frech verlacht.	How sorry I feel for those perverted hearts that against you, my God, are set I truly tremble and feel a thousand pangs When they joy only in vengeance and hatred. Most just God, what must you then think when with their truly satanic intrigues They so brazenly deride your strict commands about punishment...
Ach! Ohne Zweifel hast du so gedacht: Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen!	Ah! Without doubt you have thought: How sorry I feel for those deviant hearts!

Tyshawn Sorey: Songs for Death

Texts by various authors

I. after Were You There?

Text from traditional spiritual

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they rolled the stone away?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble

II. after Sweet Little Jesus Baby

Text by Robert MacGimsey (1898 - 1979)

Sweet little Jesus boy
They made you be born in a manger
Sweet little holy child
We didn't know who you were
We did not know you'd come to save us Lord
To take away our sins
Our eyes were blind, we could not see
Our eyes were blind, We could not see
We don't know who you are

Long time ago you were born
Born in a manger
Sweet little Jesus now
The world, the world treats you mean Lord
But that's how things are down here
We don't know who you are
You have told us how we are trying
You have shown us how,
Even when you were dying
Jesus seems we can't do right
But please forgive us Lord
We didn't know it was you

III. after Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Text by Wallis Willis (probably 1820-1880)

Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home.
I looked over Jordan, and what did I see?
A band of angels coming after me,
Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home,
If You get there before I do,
Tell all my friends I am coming too
Swing low, sweet chariot
Coming for to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for...
Coming for...
Coming for...

Caroline Shaw: "Agnus Dei"

Text from the Mass ordinary

Agnus Dei
Qui tollis peccata mundi
Miserere nobis
Agnus dei
Qui tollis peccata mundi
Miserere nobis
Dona nobis pacem
hominibus bonæ voluntatis

Lamb of God
Who takes away the sins of the world
have mercy on us
Lamb of God
Who takes away the sins on the world
Have mercy on us
Grant us peace
Grant us peace.

J.S. Bach: "Komm süßes Kreuz" from *St. Matthew Passion*, BWV 244

Text by Christian Friedrich Henrici as Picander (1700 - 1764)

Komm, süßes Kreuz, so will ich sagen,
Mein Jesu, gib es immer her!
Wird mein Leiden einst zu schwer,
So hilfst du mir es selber tragen.

Come, sweet Cross, this I want to say:
My Jesus, give it always to me!
If my suffering becomes too heavy one day,
You yourself will help me bear it.

Margaret Bonds: "To a Brown Girl, Dead"

Text by Countee Cullen (1903-1946)

With two white roses on her breasts,
White Candles at head and feet,
Dark Madonna of the grave she rests;
Lord Death has found her sweet.

Her mother pawned her wedding ring
To lay her out in white;
She'd be so proud she'd dance and sing
To see herself tonight.

Caroline Shaw: "Credo"

Text from the Mass ordinary

Credo

I believe

J.S. Bach: "Mache dich, mein Herze, rein" from *St. Matthew Passion*, BWV 244

Text by Picander | Translation by Étude Arts

Mache dich, mein Herze, rein,
Ich will Jesum selbst begraben,
Denn er soll nunmehr in mir
Für und für
Seine süße Ruhe haben,
Welt, geh aus, laß Jesum ein.

Make yourself pure, my heart
I want to bury Jesus myself.
For from now on he shall have in me,
Forever and ever,
his sweet repose.
World, get out, let Jesus in!

Moses Hogan: "Give Me Jesus"

Text from traditional spiritual

In the morning, when I rise,
In the morning, when I rise,
In the morning, when I rise,
Give me Jesus.

Give me Jesus.
Give me Jesus,
You may have all this world,
Give me Jesus.

Dark midnight was my cry,
Dark midnight was my cry,
Dark midnight was my cry,
Give me Jesus.

Oh, when I come to die,
Oh, when I come to die,
Oh, when I come to die,
Give me Jesus.

Caroline Shaw: "Gloria"

Text from the Mass ordinary

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you.

J.S. Bach: "Quia fecit mihi magna" from *Magnificat in D major*, BWV 243

Translation by Étude Arts

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est,
et sanctum nomen eius.

Because he who is mighty has done great things for
me, and holy is his name.

Moses Hogan: "My Good Lord Done Been Here"

Text from traditional spiritual

My Good Lord's done been here!
Blessed my soul and gone away,
My Good Lord's done been here,
Blessed my soul and gone.

Never did I think that he was so nigh...
He spoke and he made me laugh and cry
Sinner better mind how you walk on the cross...
Your foot might slip and your soul get lost...

Caroline Shaw: "Sanctus"

Text from the Mass ordinary

Sanctus
Sanctus
Sanctus
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua
Osanna in excelsis

Holy
Holy
Holy
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory
Hallelujah in the highest

"Amazing Grace"

Text by John Newton (1725 – 1807) | Arranged by Davóne Tines (b. 1986)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

Julius Eastman: "Prelude to the Holy Presence of Joan D'Arc"

Text by the composer

Saint Michael said
Saint Catherine said
Saint Margaret said
They said
Joan
Speak boldly when they question you
Joan
Say boldly

Igee Dieudonné: "VIGIL"

Arranged by Davóne Tines

Where there is darkness, we'll bring light.
Hallelujah

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Davone Tines is a path-breaking artist whose work not only encompasses a diverse repertoire—from early music to new commissions by leading composers—but also explores the social issues of today. He received wide acclaim during the 2015-16 season for his performances in the world premiere of Kaija Saariaho's *Only the Sound Remains* directed by Peter Sellars at the Dutch National Opera; and at the Ojai Music Festival in works by Caroline Shaw and Saariaho with the Calder Quartet and the International Contemporary Ensemble.

Mr. Tines was co-creator, with director Zack Winokur and composer Michael Schachter, of *The Black Clown*, a music theater experience inspired by Langston Hughes' poem of the same name that animates a

Black man's resilience against America's legacy of oppression by fusing vaudeville, opera, jazz, and spirituals. The world premiere was given by the American Repertory Theater in 2018 and presented by Lincoln Center in summer 2019. Highlights of past performances include his San Francisco Opera debut in John Adams and Peter Sellars's *Girls of the Golden West*; his Opera Theatre of Saint Louis debut in the world premiere of Terence Blanchard and Kasi Lemmons's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* based on the memoir of *New York Times* op-ed columnist Charles M. Blow; and his Brooklyn Academy of Music debut in Matthew Aucoin's *Crossing* in a production by Tony Award-winning director Diane Paulus.

This season Mr. Tines performs David Lang's *prisoner of the state* in its European premiere with the BBC Symphony, Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* with the Cincinnati Symphony, and John Adams' *El Niño* with the Houston Symphony. He also appears on numerous concert stages in collaboration with The Dover Quartet and gives his first American recital tour with performances presented by Carnegie Hall, Celebrity Series of Boston, and Da Camera Society of Houston. Mr. Tines is a winner of the 2020 Sphinx Medal of Excellence, recognizing extraordinary classical musicians of color. He received the 2018 Emerging Artists Award from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and is a graduate of Harvard University and The Juilliard School.



Pianist **Adam Nielsen** enjoys a diverse career as a soloist, collaborator, coach, and répétiteur. He has appeared in concert with the St. Louis Symphony, Utah Symphony, Stony Brook Symphony, the Fry Street Quartet, A Far Cry, Windscape, the Verona Quartet, and in recital with Andres Cardenes, Tamara Mumford, Ryan Speedo Green, Steven LaBrie, Simone Osborne, Claire DeSevigne, and Ying Fang. Concert appearances include Carnegie Hall, The Frick, The Kennedy Center, St. Louis Celebrity Series, Boston Celebrity Series, Houston DaCamera, Ravinia Festival, Aspen Festival, Chicago's Myra Hess Series, and the Vilar Center in Beaver Creek, CO.

As an opera pianist, Mr. Nielsen has worked for Harvard's American Repertory Theater, Aspen Opera Theater, Virginia Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Richard Tucker Foundation, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, The Dallas Opera, and Chicago Lyric. He has collaborated with conductors including Nicola Luisotti, Pier Giorgio Morandi, Emmanuel Villaume, Antony Walker, Carolyn Kuan, Stephen Lord, Gary Wedow, Speranza Scappucci, Anne Manson, and Matthew Aucoin.

Mr. Nielsen has collaborated on several film scores including *The Upside*, *The French Dispatch* (Wes Anderson), and *The Chaperone* (PBS). He recently recorded solo works of Chopin, Balakirev, and Mozart for the upcoming film, *Unforgiven* (Netflix). Since 2011, he has been a member of the vocal arts faculty at the Juilliard School, where he is currently principal coach and music advisor to the masters-level singers. In 2018, he joined the music staff at the Metropolitan Opera.



ABOUT VOCAL ARTS DC

The mission of VADC, now celebrating our 30th anniversary season, is to nurture and promote the classical voice recital genre and to introduce new audiences to the richness, cultural diversity, and beauty of the classical song literature. VADC is the only organization anywhere in North America, and one of the few in the world, which presents a full concert season solely devoted to classical voice recitals. As such, it has made Washington DC a magnet for the world's greatest stars of the opera and concert stage. VADC presents a season of six to eight recitals, usually in the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater, occasionally in other venues. These generally feature world-renowned singers, although VADC also attempts to introduce to its audience emerging artists whom it considers to be on the threshold of international stardom. Beginning with our 25th anniversary season of 2015-2016, Vocal Arts DC made a firm commitment to broaden the contemporary library of solo vocal works by commissioning new works from living composers. Toward that goal, we have presented world premieres of new works by Jake Heggie, Gregory Spears, and Lowell Liebermann, and will offer first hearings of new pieces by Caroline Shaw and Tyshawn Sorey during our 2020-2021 season. In addition to its main stage performances, VADC operates an in-school educational program for secondary and high school students in collaboration with the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, DC.

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