

NJSO and Trilogy: An Opera Company present *Emmett Till* performance and event on Nov 10

NEWARK, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and Trilogy: An Opera Company—a Newark-based opera company that focuses on the works of Black composers and subject matter relative to the Black experience—present a free panel discussion and performance of selections from Michael Raphael's *Emmett Till* in a special Zoom event on November 10 at 8 pm.

The event, a dialogue with Trilogy founder and bass Kevin Maynor and community leaders, explores the impact of Till's 1955 murder and the role of the arts in sharing important stories and responding to issues of social justice.

Maynor hosts a panel discussion with Bethany Baptist Church Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Timothy Levi Adkins-Jones; retired Director of Human Resources for East Orange, Newark and Milburn Public Schools Candace Wildy; former Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey President & CEO Delores Tyson; Township of Irvington Municipal Judge and former Essex County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Keith Harvest; State of New Jersey Assistant Deputy Public Defender Frantz Massé; Zion Hill Baptist Church Senior Pastor Rev. Douglas Williams and NJSO President & CEO Gabriel van Aalst.

The performance features Maynor as the archangel; Chantel Grant as Mamie Till (mother of Emmett); and Daniel Gunwa, David Gunwa and Kordell Tate Roberts (all of the Newark Boys Chorus, directed by Donald Morris) as Emmett.

Patrons should register to attend in advance at njsymphony.org/emmettill.

Maynor writes: "The question that some very powerful investment bankers asked me was, 'Where is the opera on George Floyd?' My answer to them and you who would ask the same is, 'Floyd reminds us of what has been going in this country for years.'

"You see, Emmett is an early 'start' that changed the attitude of Black Americans on all levels. The murder was cruel beyond measure and slowly revealed, in fear of aggressive reaction. The answer to why we have so much social unrest is because of so many previous crimes against Black people and people are sick and tired of it. One new work on George Floyd does not point to the problem that does not change with those who are not Black. There is apathy and a lack of knowledge of what blacks have had to endure to make a difference in the United States of America. Code names, such as 'underserved neighborhoods,' prove to me that today we are afraid to call the names of the so-called underserved. George Floyd is a starting point for white and Black Americans alike!! Hence the social unrest. Our grandparents have told us the stories, which are hard to believe when you are exposed and educated in America.

"I don't want to learn from experience, teach me ahead of time.' This is what I live on, and I am eager to teach all ahead of time, before we learn from experience. The work from Michael Raphael uses beautiful music to get right to it. He touches our heart and draws musical correlations that pull us closer. We have a chance to hear from composers that are not writing for themselves but are listening to the sounds around them and choosing the words of our neighbors. Our orchestras and opera houses have the new responsibility that Hollywood years ago embraced. We 'serious' artists must be relevant. So many of our elders know so little of the struggle of so much of America. Black companies will continue to show a path. Collaboration is still important as long as it does not dilute the message. Beautiful music must never be left out and we must do as my Grandmother would say: 'listening on hearing.'

"She was waiting for truth.

“The panel chosen will provide very few answers but lots of truth.”

For more information and to register, visit njsymphony.org/emmetttill.

For a full list of scheduled NJSO Virtual 20–21 programs, including NJSO at Home performances, visit www.njsymphony.org/virtual. Additional program announcements will be made throughout this virtual season.

The Program

SELECTIONS FROM *EMMETT TILL*

In collaboration with Trilogy: An Opera Company

Tue, Nov 10, at 8 pm

PANEL

KEVIN MAYNOR host

REV. DR. TIMOTHY LEVI ADKINS-JONES Senior Pastor, Bethany Baptist Church

CANDACE WILDY Retired Director of Human Resources, East Orange, Newark and Milburn Public Schools

DELORES TYSON Former President & CEO, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan New Jersey

KEITH HARVEST Municipal Judge, Township of Irvington; Former Chief Assistant Prosecutor, Essex County

FRANTZ MASSÉ Assistant Deputy Public Defender, State of New Jersey

REV. DOUGLAS WILLIAMS Senior Pastor, Zion Hill Baptist Church

GABRIEL VAN AALST President & CEO, NJSO

KEVIN MAYNOR archangel

CHANTEL GRANT Mamie Till (mother of Emmett)

DANIEL GUNWA, DAVID GUNWA, KORDELL TATE ROBERTS Emmett

NEWARK BOYS CHORUS | Donald Morris, director

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA STRINGS

MICHAEL RAPHAEL Selections from *Emmett Till*

The NJSO joins forces with Newark-based opera company Trilogy for a special video presentation of selections from Michael Raphael’s *Emmett Till* oratorio. Join community leaders and Trilogy Artistic Director Kevin Maynor for an evening of conversation about the impact of Till’s murder and the way that art and music help tell important stories, followed by an exclusive premiere of the project.

Trilogy: An Opera Company

Trilogy: An Opera Company focuses on the works of Black composers and subject matter relative to the Black experience. Trilogy has brought forth some 30 new operatic works by composers such as Dorothy Rudd Moore, Michael Raphael, Julius Williams Trevor Weston, Adolphus Hailstork, Anthony Davis, Dwayne Fulton, Trent Johnson, Richard Thompson, Ulysses Kay and Scott Joplin. This year, we will do works by H. Leslie Adams and Dwayne Fulton. Trilogy has done more new fully staged operatic works by Americans than any other company. We have brought forth more stories of Black people than anyone. Our *Ring* cycle featuring African Americans was the first *Ring* by Richard Wagner, ever in the state. Trilogy has developed black singers, directors, producers, designers, lighting designers, video editors, costume designers, instrumentalists, videographers, fight coordinators and hair/makeup/wig artists, as well as stage managers. We have put children on and behind the stage. We have met the needs of all people, exposing all people to our brand.

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

Named “a vital, artistically significant musical organization” by *The Wall Street Journal*, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence and critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra’s superb musicians.

Music Director Xian Zhang—a “dynamic podium presence” *The New York Times* has praised for her “technical abilities, musicianship and maturity”—continues her acclaimed leadership of the NJSO. The Orchestra presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra’s statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People and the NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles, led by José Luis Domínguez. NJSO musicians annually perform original chamber music programs at community events in a variety of settings statewide through the NJSO Community Partners program.

Tickets are available for purchase by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or at njsymphony.org.

The Orchestra’s online hub for free NJSO Virtual 20–21 content is njsymphony.org/virtual.

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