**Voodoo Dolls** (2008)
Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

**Voodoo Dolls** was commissioned in 2008 and choreographed by the JUMP! Dance Company of Rhode Island, a collaborative work among their faculty and students. The choreography was a suite of dances, each one representing a different traditional children’s doll: Russian dolls, marionettes, rag dolls, Barbie, voodoo dolls... The piece is influenced by west African drumming patterns and lyrical chant motives, all of which feature highlights of improvisation within the ensemble.

-- Note by **Jessie Montgomery** --
Deep River: Rhapsody for String Quartet (2021)
Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941)

Deep River: Rhapsody for String Quartet was commissioned by Apollo Chamber Players in 2021. They requested that I base my composition on material representing my heritage in some way. I chose (as I usually do in my string pieces) to quote a favorite spiritual, this one being “Deep River”. This piece represents a slave’s visions of escape, over the river (usually the Ohio). This idea carries with it a sense of energy, of freedom, even joy, and the humor they imagine upon deliverance. A sudden interruption by the whip brings them back down to the cruelty and sadness of the situation.

Eventually, sadly, they recover, and, quietly embrace again the distant vision they hope to realize someday.

-- Note by Adolphus Hailstork --
During Antonin Dvořák’s years in America (1892-1895) as director of the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York City, composer Henry Thacker Burleigh, who was enrolled in the school at the time, introduced Dvořák to African American spirituals and dances, deeply influencing Dvořák’s American works. Just as Dvořák used “Going Home” as the basis for the largo theme in his symphony From the New World, in my new composition for Apollo Chamber Players, Sorrow Song and Jubilee, I’ve based the music on the “sorrow song” (now known as spiritual) “Swing Low Sweet Chariot”. It’s a short piece, a miniature dumka and furiant or introduction and dance, composed as an homage to the creative partnership of Burleigh and Dvořák.

-- Note by Libby Larsen --
Growing up in the shadow of the Great Smoky Mountains, my heart, eyes, and ears naturally absorbed the sounds, light, and inherent music of the mountain and its people. As a consequence, when I came to compose my first opera, the resonance of that area lead me to choose as my story Charles Frazier’s novel, *Cold Mountain*. The struggles of survival in Appalachia, the majesty of its natural features, and the sonorities of the mountain’s music, color the quilt of that opera and of this string quartet. To take some of the opera’s music and use it as the building block for a new
composition was an interesting challenge. It caused me to rethink structure in wordless story-telling, and pushed me to create new music that invokes similar emotions and hue within the boundaries of the genre. It also made me remember what it was like to experience the magic of living in the shadow of a mountain.

“In the Shadow of the Mountain” was commissioned by Apollo Chamber Players, as part of their 20x2020 initiative. This work was generously underwritten by Thomas & Terri Kosten.

-- Note by Jennifer Higdon --
The A-minor piano quintet is Florence Price’s second contribution to the genre. It was preceded by her G-major quartet (1929) and followed by her Five Folksongs in Counterpoint for string quartet (1951). Stylistically, the melodic and harmonic language of the A-minor Quintet more obviously invokes mid twentieth-century idioms than does either of the other quartets.

The first movement begins with a quiet, brooding ostinato whose combination of a pedal point with a narrow, chromatically descending and ascending motive strongly contrasts with both the extensive chromaticism of the transition and the warm lyricism of the second subject — a theme whose evocative blue thirds directly bespeak Price’s African American heritage. This movement seems to be driven by the tension between the narrow constraints of its opening ostinato and the melodic breadth of its main subjects — a tension that finally breaks free into a tempestuous coda that is a testament to Price’s sure-fire dramatic pacing.

That emotional drama gives way to the gentle, rocking lyricism of the second movement — likewise infused with melodic and harmonic turns that bring the melancholy beauty of Black idioms into the tradition-bound stylistic vocabulary of the mid twentieth-century string quartet. The second movement, too, employs extensive dissonances that are more a part of the modernist idioms of the early twentieth century than they are of traditional African American culture.

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The main theme of the third movement is in the style of a Juba dance or hambone, a patently African lively dance that involved body-slapping, foot-stomping, and hand-clapping; this section frames a more relaxed allegretto that is likewise based on African American dance idioms. The last movement puts Price’s advanced harmonic technique on display in a rondo form of remarkable emotional breadth—a variety further emphasized by the searching, quasi-improvisatory Andantino featuring the solo viola, violin, and cello.

-- Note by John Michael Cooper --

Price was born into a mixed-race family in Little Rock, Arkansas where, a few years later (in a quasi-symbolic coincidence), William Grant Still would also grow up. Price received early musical tuition from her mother,
which was followed by formal studies in Boston, where Price attended the New England Conservatory, studying composition and also gaining qualifications as a piano teacher and an organist.

On her mother’s advice, she passed herself off as Mexican during her student years in the attempt to avoid racial harassment. She married the lawyer Thomas J. Price in 1912, after which she embarked on a succession of teaching posts in her native South, including a spell as head of the music department at Clark University, Atlanta. She moved with her family to Chicago in 1927, where she continued to develop her compositional aspirations at the Chicago Musical College and American Conservatory. Chicago was in this period undergoing an African American cultural rejuvenation similar to the more famous Harlem Renaissance in New York, in which Still became a leading figure in the 1930s, though the primary motivation for the relocation had been a sharp increase in racial tensions in Little Rock. There the egregious behaviour had ranged from routine segregation and prejudice - for example, Price was unable to become a member of the Arkansas Music Teachers’ Association, which was all-white - to a notorious outbreak of rioting triggered by the gruesome lynching of an African American man in May 1927.

As a composer, Price was best known during her lifetime for her songs, which included arrangements of spirituals, as well as her pedagogical piano music; examples of both genres were published following her move to Chicago, though much of her vast output was destined to remain in

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manuscript. She also wrote four symphonies and several concertos, and was not averse to composing and arranging light, commercial music – especially following her divorce (which she initiated herself in 1928), when composing for radio became a useful source of income alongside her other freelance activities as a private piano teacher and cinema organist accompanying silent films.

Price wrote two piano quintets, the better known (in E minor) dating from 1936. The date of the A minor Quintet is unclear: when the manuscript was discovered posthumously in the Illinois cache, it bore an inscription which Price had added in 1952, the year before her death, but on stylistic grounds it may well have been written at around the time of the E minor Quintet.

Although characteristically conservative in its late-romantic idiom, the piece celebrates Price’s African American heritage by echoing the musical language of spirituals and hymns (second movement), and reworking elements of the popular juba stomping dance that hailed from the slave plantations of the Deep South (third movement). Under the editorship of Lia Jensen-Abbott, the A minor Quintet was first published in 2017 by Barbara Garvey Jackson’s ClarNan Editions in Fayetteville, where Price’s archive is now housed at the University of Arkansas.

-- Note by Mervyn Cooke (2021) --
Pianist **Lara Downes** has been called “an explorer whose imagination is fired by bringing notice to the underrepresented and forgotten” (The Log Journal). An iconoclast and trailblazer, her dynamic work as a sought-after performer, a Billboard Chart-topping recording artist, a producer, curator, activist, and arts advocate positions her as a cultural visionary on the national arts scene.

Ms. Downes’ musical roadmap seeks inspiration from the legacies of history, family, and collective memory, excavating the broad landscape of American music to create a series of acclaimed performance and recording projects that serve as gathering spaces for her listeners to find common ground and shared experience.

During the 2021-22 season, Ms. Downes’ performances and residencies include appearances with the Boston...
Pops, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Washington Performing Arts, the Ravinia Festival, the Gilmore Foundation Saratoga Performing Arts Center, the Clarice Smith Center at University of Maryland, the Oregon Bach Festival, and Apollo Chamber Players.

Ms. Downes is the creator and curator of the Rising Sun Music initiative, a groundbreaking recording series that sheds light on the music and stories of Black composers over the past 200 years, featuring performances by a wide range of today’s leading artists including Davóne Tines, Will Liverman, Nicole Cabell, and Regina Carter. She is the creator and host of the NPR Music series AMPLIFY with Lara Downes, and the popular host of Evening Music with Lara Downes on Classical KDFC in San Francisco. Her work has been supported by the Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Sphinx Organization, the Classical Recording Foundation Award, the Loghaven Artist Residency, and the Center for Cultural Innovation, among others.

Her fierce commitment to activism and advocacy sees her working with organizations including the ACLU, Feeding America, the Lower Eastside Girls Club, and the Sphinx Organization. She is an Artist Ambassador for Headcount, a non-partisan organization that uses the power of music to register voters and promote participation in democracy.

Learn more at LaraDownes.com.
Pulitzer Prize- and three-time Grammy-winner Jennifer Higdon has become a major figure in contemporary Classical music and makes her living from commissions. She was most recently awarded the prestigious Nemmers Prize in Music Composition from Northwestern University. Her works represent a wide range of genres, from orchestral to chamber, to wind ensemble, as well as vocal, choral and opera. Her music has been hailed by *Fanfare* magazine as having “the distinction of being at once complex, sophisticated but readily accessible emotionally”, with the *Times of London* citing it as “…traditionally rooted, yet imbued with integrity and freshness.” *The Chicago Sun Times* recently
cited her music as “both modern and timeless, complex and sophisticated, and immensely engaging in a way that both charms and galvanizes an audience craving something new and full of urgency, yet not distancing.” John von Rhein of the Chicago Tribune called her writing, “beautiful, accessible, inventive, and impeccably crafted.”

Higdon’s list of commissioners is extensive and includes The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Chicago Symphony, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, as well such groups as the Tokyo String Quartet, the Lark Quartet, Apollo Chamber Players, Eighth Blackbird, and the President’s Own Marine Band. She has also written works for such artists as baritone Thomas Hampson, pianists Yuja Wang and Gary Graffman, violinists Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Jennifer Koh, and Hilary Hahn. Her first opera, Cold Mountain, won the prestigious International Opera Award for Best World Premiere in 2016; the first American opera to do so in the award’s history. It sold out its premiere run in Santa Fe, as well as in North Carolina, and Philadelphia (becoming the third highest selling opera in Opera Philadelphia’s history).

Jennifer received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, with the committee citing Higdon’s work as “a deeply engaging piece that combines flowing lyricism with dazzling virtuosity.” She has also received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts & Letters, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Pew Fellowship in the Arts, The Independence Foundation, the NEA, and ASCAP. A winner of the Van Cliburn Piano...continued
Competition’s American Composers Invitational, her Secret & Glass Gardens was performed by the semi-finalists. Higdon has been a featured composer at many festivals including Aspen, Tanglewood, Vail, Norfolk, Grand Teton, and Cabrillo. She has served as Composer-in-Residence with half a dozen orchestras, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Fort Worth Symphony. She was also honored to serve as one of the Creative Directors of the Boundless Series for the Cincinnati Symphony’s 2012-13 season. During the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years she served as the Barr Laureate Scholar at UMKC.

A recent concert season saw the successful premieres of 3 major concerti: the Low Brass Concerto with the Chicago Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra, her Tuba Concerto with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and the Harp Concerto for Yolanda Kondonassis with the Rochester Philharmonic and Harrisburg Symphony. Higdon enjoys more than 200 performances a year of her works. With more than 650 performances thus far, her orchestral work, *blue cathedral*, is the most performed contemporary orchestral work in the 21st Century repertoire. Her works have been recorded on over 70 CDs.

Among her many awards, Higdon has won three Grammys for Best Contemporary Classical Composition: her Percussion Concerto won in 2010, her Viola Concerto won in 2018, and her Harp Concerto won in 2020.

She received a Bachelor’s Degree in Music from Bowling Green State University, an Artist Diploma from The Curtis...continued
Institute of Music, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. She has been awarded honorary doctorates from the Hartt School and Bowling Green State University. She was recently inducted into the American Philosophical Society (founded by Benjamin Franklin).

Jennifer’s music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press.

For more information, please visit www.jenniferhigdon.com

Jennifer Higdon with the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, following the premiere of Cold Mountain Santa Fe Opera (2016)
Dallas-native **Marlea Simpson** is a second-year Viola Fellow at the New World Symphony. Hailed by the *Chicago Tribune* as “Grant Park Orchestra’s new 21-year-old wunderkind” in 2016, she currently holds the Principal Viola position with the Chicago Sinfonietta in addition to a section position with the Grant Park Orchestra after completing their Project Inclusion Program in 2014.

As an orchestral musician, Ms. Simpson has worked under conductors Leonard Slatkin, Marin Alsop, David Robertson, Dennis Russell Davies, Peter Oundjian, Carlos Kalmar, Gemma New and David Danzmayr. She has also worked with many renowned chamber musicians, including Steven Tenenbom, Merry Peckham and David Bowlin as well as the Brentano, Jasper, Jupiter and Calder quartets.

...continued
Ms. Simpson received her master’s degree from the Yale School of Music, where she studied with Ettore Causa and Steven Tenenbom. She received the Georgina Lucy Grosvenor Memorial Prize, which is awarded to the violist in the graduating class whose performances while at Yale have exhibited the highest potential for success as a soloist or chamber musician in the field. She also holds a bachelor’s degree from Oberlin Conservatory, where she studied with Peter Slowik.

Outside of music, Ms. Simpson enjoys fashion, karaoke, laughing as much as possible, and spending time with her family—especially her husband Ian and her cat, Audrey Catburn.
Houston-based Apollo Chamber Players “performs with rhythmic flair and virtuosity” (The Strad) and has “found fruitful territory” (Houston Chronicle) through innovative, globally-inspired programming and multicultural new music commissions. Winner of Chamber Music America’s prestigious Residency Partnership award, the quartet has twice performed for sold-out audiences at Carnegie Hall, and it holds the distinction of being the first American chamber ensemble to record and perform in Cuba. Apollo is featured frequently on American Public Media’s nationally-syndicated program Performance Today.

Apollo’s fifth commercial album, With Malice Toward None, reached No. 1 on Amazon’s Hot New Release chart in August 2021. The ensemble’s catalog of records has been featured on hundreds of radio and media stations nationally and internationally.
“...recasting music for a diverse and multi-ethnic generation.” (Strings Magazine). A passionate advocate of contemporary music, Apollo launched a bold project in 2014 to commission 20 new multicultural works by the end of the decade. 20x2020 saw its triumphant conclusion in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic with digital world premieres and global recording collaborations. The project features a diverse roster of the world’s leading composers and instrumentalists including Jennifer Higdon, Libby Larsen, Pamela Z, Leo Brouwer, Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate, and Vân Ánh Võ.

Apollo reaches further into the community by partnering with schools, universities, at-risk youth centers, refugee and veterans service organizations, hospitals, airports, and public libraries, providing performances, educational programs, and entrepreneurship lectures that impact a wider, underserved audience.

Learn more at www.apollochamberplayers.org

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MoonShot was produced and directed by Jeffrey and Barbara Mills of Houston-based Documentary Alliance. The film features a new soundtrack composed by Scott Szabo, performed by Apollo and acclaimed concert pianist Andrew Staupe with narration by St. John Flynn. It stars Emmy-winning Chickasaw composer Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate and Chickasaw astronaut John Herrington, the first American Indian to fly in space. MoonShot was underwritten by a highly competitive Mid-America Arts Alliance ARTISTIC INNOVATIONS grant award.

We will be screening MoonShot again this season - stay tuned for updates and more information! Our MOONSHOT goal is for the film to be featured on a worldwide streaming platform. Thank you to all who helped make this project possible.
The results of 20x2020 are astounding and deeply enjoyable.”

—AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

No. 1: **Sorrow Song and Jubilee** by Libby Larsen | HoustonPress Masterminds award
No. 2: **Splash of Indigo** by Marty Regan | C. Howard Pieper Foundation
No. 3: **Thracian Airs of Besime Sultan** by Erberk Eryılmaz | Charlotte Jones
No. 4: **Three Goat Blues** by Gilad Cohen | Houston Arts Alliance (HAA)
No. 5: **String Quartet No. 2 TEXAS** by Arthur Hernandez
No. 6: **String Quartet No. 4, Obala More** by Alexandra du Bois | Frederic Attermeier
No. 7: **Imágenes de Cuba** by Arthur Gottschalk | Richard Jimenez and Adan Medrano
Nos. 8a: **Piano Quintet No. 1 Aleppo** by Malek Jandali | C. Howard Pieper Foundation
Nos. 8b: String quartet in e-flat major by Malek Jandali
*World Premiere at Carnegie Hall (Weill Recital Hall), February 4, 2017
No. 9: **Four Dreams** for string quartet by Christopher Walczak | Adam Chandler
No. 10: **Andean Suite**, for string quartet & guitar by Javier Farias | C. Howard Pieper Foundation
No. 11: **What is the Word**, for string quartet + digital playback by Christopher Theofanidis & Mark Wingate | Donald and Rhonda Sweeney
Nos. 12a&b: **Cosmic Knowledge & A Mouthful of Universe** by Chitravina N. Ravikiran & C. Howard Pieper Foundation
No. 13: **Dreamtime Suite No. 5 Voices from the Steppes** by Virko Baley | Robert and Lee Ardell
No. 14: **Mây [Cloud]** by Dan Bâu and string quartet by Vũ Nhật Tấn | John and Lisa Jones
No. 15: **String Quartet No. 6 Nostalgia de las Montañas** by Leo Brouwer | Lorenzo Martinez, Polly Johnson & Shelby Allen, and Roger & Candice Moore
No. 16: **The Unraveling** for string quartet, voice and MacBook Pro by Pamela Z
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No. 17: **L’esprit du Nord (Spirit of the North)** by Pierre Jalbert | Chantal Ghadially and Anonymous
No. 18: **Moonstrike** by Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate | C. Howard Pieper Foundation
No. 19: **We Will Sing One Song** for string quartet, duduk, percussion and electronics by Eve Beglarian | Pamela Auburn
No. 20: **In the Shadow of the Mountain** by Jennifer Higdon | Thomas and Terri Kosten

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