

LONDON SYMPHONIA **2023-24** SEASON



FEBRUARY 24, 2024 | 7:30 pm | Metropolitan United

FREEDOM: THE SPIRIT AND LEGACY OF BLACK MUSIC

Guest Artists

- Beau Dixon, *curator, music director, arranger, pianist, singer*
- Alana Bridgewater, *singer*
- Camille Eanga-Selenge, *singer*
- Robert Ball, *singer*
- Rohan Staton, *guitars*
- Roger Williams, *bass*
- Joe Bowden, *drums*
- Scott Harrison, *conductor*

Guest Artist Sponsor: **canada**  **life**™

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Dear Friends,

On behalf of London City Council, let me welcome you to the London Symphonia's 2023-24 Season. As we gather together in the name of music and art, we celebrate not only the remarkable talents of this orchestra but also the vibrant cultural tapestry of our beloved city.

London, often referred to as the Forest City, is indeed a place where music runs deep within its veins. We stand tall as the first UNESCO City of Music in Canada, a distinction that underscores the profound significance of music in our community.

London Symphonia has long been a shining star in our artistic constellation, serving as a creative catalyst that ignites our collective passion for excellence, the love of music, and innovative collaborations. Through inclusive programming, you provide us with a unique opportunity to explore and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures that call London home.

I join with you in celebrating the dawn of London Symphonia's 2023-24 Season. May this season be a symphony of unforgettable moments, a crescendo of creativity, and a fortissimo of artistic excellence. As we come together in the name of music, let us embrace the harmonious melodies that unite us and the shared vision of a culturally enriched London.

Best wishes to all for another positive and memorable experience!

Kind regards,

Josh Morgan
Mayor, City of London

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Welcome to Freedom: The Spirit and Legacy of Black Music. We're delighted that you are part of this incredible journey!

Join us as we continue to welcome a diverse array of extraordinary artists this spring, some of whom you may know, and a new generation of performers and composers. Each concert will take you on a unique musical journey of discovery.

Great music and amazing artistry await you! Upcoming programming includes cherished orchestral masterworks, works by living composers, including a World Premiere, and an eclectic mix of jazz and modern musical genres.

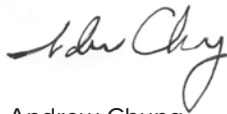
Our audience members are vital to the continued success of London Symphonia. On behalf of the musicians, staff and Board of Directors, thank you for your support.

We look forward to seeing you often.

Sincerely,



April Voth
Executive Director



Andrew Chung
Artistic Producer

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

London Symphonia wishes to acknowledge and honour the land on which we are meeting as the traditional territory of the First Nations peoples; the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation (part of the Anishinaabe), the Oneida Nation of the Thames (part of the Haudenosaunee) and the Munsee-Delaware Nation (part of the Leni-Lunaape). Let us reflect on how we as individuals and as a community can carry this spirit of gratitude into everything we do to honour the work that all the First Nations peoples of the Turtle Island have done, and continue to do, for the land that supports us all.

FREEDOM: THE SPIRIT AND LEGACY OF BLACK MUSIC

FEBRUARY 24, 2024

7:30 pm

Metropolitan United

Beau Dixon, *curator, music director, arranger, pianist, singer*

Alana Bridgewater, *singer*

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Roger Williams, *bass*

Joe Bowden, *drums*

Scott Harrison, *conductor*

ACT ONE

Freedom (For My People)

Music and Lyrics by Sterling Magee & Adam Gussow

Redemption Song

Music and Lyrics by Bob Marley

Trouble So Hard

Music and Lyrics by Vera Hall

Hold On

Traditional

Strange Fruit

Music and Lyrics by Lewis Allan

Follow The Drinking Gourd

Traditional

When The Levee Breaks

Music and Lyrics by Kansas Joe McCoy & Memphis Minnie

Mississippi Goddam

Music and Lyrics by Nina Simone

Four Women

Music and Lyrics by Nina Simone

A Black Man In A White World

Music and Lyrics by Michael Kiwanuka

Why?

Music and Lyrics by Nina Simone

(The King Of Love Is Dead)

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Music and Lyrics by J. Rosamond Johnson &
James Weldon Johnson

A Change Is Gonna Come

Music and Lyrics by Sam Cooke

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO

Oh Freedom	Traditional
Love's In Need Of Love Today	Music and Lyrics by Stevie Wonder
Oh Happy Day	Music and Lyrics by Edwin Hawkins & Philip Doddridge
I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free	Music and Lyrics by Billy Taylor & Dick Dallas
Hymn To Freedom	Music and Lyrics by Oscar Peterson & Harriette Hamilton
People Get Ready	Music and Lyrics by Curtis Mayfield
Someday We'll All Be Free	Music and Lyrics by Danny Hathaway & Edward Howard
What's Going On	Music and Lyrics by Al Cleveland, Marvin Gaye & Renaldo Benson
To Be Young, Gifted & Black	Music and Lyrics by Nina Simone & Weldon Irvine
Freedom	Music and Lyrics by Beyoncé, Jonny Coffey, Carla Marie Williams, Dean McIntosh, Kendrick Lamar, Frank Tirado, Alan Lomax, John Lomax, Sr.

READINGS:

Emancipation Poem by Haii (Howard J. Davis) from “My Wide Sargassi”

What Is Freedom by Lance Dixon

Harlem by Langston Hughes

Phenomenal Women by Maya Angelou

Quotations from Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, Nina Simone, Martin Luther King Jr., Stevie Wonder

With thanks to George Randolph

Orchestrations by Michael McClennan.

Arrangements by Michael McClennan and Beau Dixon.

Tonight's performance of *Freedom: The Spirit and Legacy of Black Music* is based on *Freedom Cabaret: The Spirit and Legacy of Black Music* and *Freedom 2.0: Black Music that Shaped the Dream of America* originally presented by the Stratford Festival.

This concert runs approximately 2 hour and 10 minutes, and will be performed with a 20-minute intermission.

LONDON SYMPHONIA: TONIGHT'S MUSICIANS

Violin 1

Mikela Witjes
Sarah Wiebe
Mel Martin
Yanet Campbell-Secades*
Calvin Tsang

Violin 2

Andrew Chung
Jessica Elliotson
Andrew Bensler
Chia-Hsuan Chen*

Viola

Kelvin Enns
Ellis Yuen-Rapati*
Jaqueline Milne
Tasman Tantasawat*

Cello

Ben Bolt-Martin
Patrick Theriault
Eve Thompson*

Bass

Brian Baty

Horn

Ron George
Kate Stone

Trombone

Mike Polci

Trumpet

Shawn Spicer
Phil Seguin

Harp

Angela Schwarzkopf

Percussion

Tim Francom

*London Symphonia Fellows from Western University



MEET BEAU DIXON AND THE MUSICIANS AFTER THE CONCERT

Come to the Great Room, immediately behind the stage. We're looking forward to seeing you!

CURATOR'S NOTES



Ever since the first slave ship landed at Jamestown in 1619, Black music has ultimately been about freedom. From the moans of the negro spirituals, the sonic tones of an electric guitar, or the fury of an urban rapper speaking the truth with two turntables and a microphone, people have been pulled in by these revolutionary sounds. Black music gives us a voice to express the joy and burden of our shared history. Truthfully, sometimes it feels like it's the only voice we've been given.

But what does it mean to be free? In a music industry predominantly run by white business executives, many Black artists were promised success, fame, and fortune – only to lose the rights to their own songs because of a lack of knowledge and support on how to protect their work. Decades of folk, blues, reggae, dancehall, and R&B hits suffer exploitation and re-branding as historically Black musical genres are absorbed into the mainstream, a trend that continues today. Perhaps most tragically, as these styles of music are appropriated, the voices of Black artists, and their social and political messages, are lost.

Black music, at its heart, is about freedom – not just the idea of social and economic freedom driven by racial injustice, but a freedom of the mind and soul. It's possible that the Black voice is singing for all people who are seeking freedom from within.

It would be impossible to encapsulate in just one performance the influence Black music has had on popular culture. I must leave that up to scholars and academics who have been teaching it for decades. Instead, for the next ninety minutes, with the help of my talented brothers and sisters, we will lift up just a few of these voices – the lesser-known and forgotten artists, and the celebrated successes; shining a light on the history, culture, spirit, and legacy of Black music.

MUSICIAN BIOS



BEAU Dixon

Curator, Music Director,
Arranger, Pianist, Singer

An award winning actor, playwright, songwriter, musician, music director, sound designer, **Beau Dixon** is Artistic Director of Firebrand Theatre. His plays have been produced in theatres throughout Canada, and as a performer he has toured extensively throughout North America and Europe.

In 2021, Beau created *Freedom Cabaret: The Spirit and Legacy of Black Music* for the Stratford Festival. It received such rave reviews that he created *Freedom 2.0: Black Music That Shaped The Dream Of America* for the Stratford Festival in 2022. For the past year, Beau has been performing and touring both shows throughout Ontario, and he's pleased to be performing an abridged version with the London Symphonia.

He was born in Detroit, Michigan but is a South Collegiate alumni right here in London, Ont. You can also see Beau acting at The Grand Theatre in March 2024, playing the role of Colonel Mustard in the hilarious comedy *Clue*.

His most recent co-creation, *Shape Of Home: Songs In Search Of Al Purdy*, received nine Dora Mavor Moore nominations. He is a two time recipient of the Toronto Critics Award, and Calgary Critics Award. He has also received two Dora Awards.

You can purchase any of his self produced albums on itunes and other streaming platforms.



SCOTT

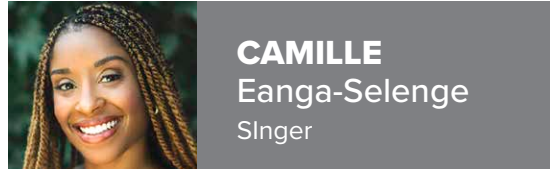
Harrison
Conductor

Scott Harrison is a freelance conductor, composer, and musician in the Toronto area. After graduating from the Etobicoke School of the Arts, Scott continued his studies at the University of Toronto, and toured Canada as a member of the National Youth Orchestra. Scott is a founding member of the Trillium Brass Quintet and has also performed with a number of ensembles and productions, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company and *The Phantom of the Opera*.

In addition to playing Second Trumpet with London Symphonia, Scott is a faculty member of the Interprovincial Music Camp, and a Visiting Artist at the Etobicoke School of the Arts. He is proud to continue working with his colleagues in London Symphonia.



ALANA
Bridgewater
Singer



CAMILLE
Eanga-Selenge
Singer

Alana Bridgewater is an actor and singer in Toronto. Best known for her role as Killer Queen in the hit musical *We Will Rock You*, Alana has been a part of Freedom Cabaret since its inception. Her recent credits include Wiletta Mayer in *Trouble In Mind* (MTC/Citadel) Odessa in *The Amen Corner* (Shaw), Novelette in *da Kink in My Hair* (Arts Club) and the title role in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Soulpepper). Alana, with her team, won Gold at The New York Radio Awards for the documentary *Journey To Jazz and Human Rights* which she narrated. Alana will be a part of Shaw Festival's 2024 season.

Camille Eanga-Selenge is a multidisciplinary artist who has performed on Canadian stages, Broadway and in film and television productions, including:

Broadway: *The Book of Mormon*, *Paradise Square OBC*. National Tour: Disney's *The Lion King*, *The Book of Mormon* **Regional:** Currently Sonya in *Natasha Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812* (Musical Stage/Crow's Theatre); *Paradise Square* (Chicago); Chiffon in *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Billy Elliot the Musical*, singer in *Freedom Cabaret* (Stratford Festival); Radio in *Caroline, or Change* (Musical Stage/Obsidian/Winter Garden); *Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz* (Ross Petty Panto/Elgin); *Home For the Holidays* (Big HQ); *The Book of Mormon* (Chicago, Melbourne); *Grease* (Irregular Entertainment/Winter Garden); *Ghost: The Musical* (Drayton Entertainment); Felicia in *Queen for a Day: The Musical* (April 30th Entertainment); Little Inez in *Hairspray* (Capitol Theatre). **Film/TV:** *Sleeping Together* (FREEFORM); *The Boys* (Amazon/Sony Pictures TV). **Training:** Bachelor of Music Theatre Performance from Sheridan College. Online: @camilove90. **Et cetera:** Camille sends love to Michael, her mom, family and friends, and The Talent House for their incredible support.





ROBERT
Ball
Singer

Born in Toronto, **Robert Ball** has travelled to and performed in over 60 countries as a featured vocalist and a headliner with Royal Caribbean International. A versatile singer/songwriter with a soulful voice and jazz sensibilities, he has appeared in many musical theatre productions and other events, including:

Theatre: *Evita / Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Drayton Entertainment); *Treemonisha* (Luminato Festival/TO Live, St Lawrence Centre); *Chicago* (Stratford Festival); *The Soul of Motown* (Stage West); *A Little Black Lie* (Tarragon Theatre); *Songs for a New World* (Chestnut Street Playhouse); various revue shows (Royal Caribbean Productions); *Voodoo* (Harlem Opera Theatre); *Funkentine Rapture* (vocal director, CUNY College). **Film/TV:** *Christmas on 5th Ave* (Principal); *Cuckoo* (Lead, short); *A Little White Lie* (Lead, short); *Fatal Attraction* (Principal, TVOne). **Concerts:** *Northern Tracks: A Canadian Mixtape*; *Freedom Cabaret, Up Close and Musical* (Stratford Festival); Friday Night Live (The ROM); Beaches Jazz Festival; Capital Pride, DC; Brooklyn Pride; 'Blockorama' Toronto Pride; Jamaica Pride; London, ON Pride. Robert has also released a string of singles and an EP that can be found on all streaming platforms.



ROHAN
Staton
Guitars

Rohan Staton is a Canadian film/TV/media composer based in Toronto. As a dynamic guitarist/performer for many years, Rohan has performed with popular artists such as Sean Jones, Jully Black, Ken Tobias and One, to name a few. He's shared stages and studios with some of the world's top session players for award shows, film soundtracks, TV series and CD projects. Career highlights include live stage performances with funk guru George Clinton, The English Beat, and Jevetta Steele.

As a composer for film/TV, Rohan has enjoyed success with several hit series including *Brides of Beverly Hills*, hit makeover shows *Style By Jury* and *Arresting Design*, and for those wondering what happened to their favourite stars from shows "back in the day", *Totally Tracked Down*. Cooking buffs will enjoy *Food Network's Chef Off!* and in the realm of documentaries *Relativity* and *Esther, Baby and Me* have both garnered critical acclaim and awards for their excellence. Rohan has also provided additional underscore for the TV series *Mutant X* (44 episodes), *Relic Hunter*, *Getting Along Famously*, *Tracker*, *The War Next Door* and the feature film *End of Days Inc.*



ROGER
Williams
Bass



JOE
Bowden
Drums

Roger Williams is a Toronto based, Jamaican born musician who calls on the music of his forefathers. From jazz, soul, R&B and the blues, to reggae and ska to rock, searing through the bass lines of his acoustic and electric basses. A highly regarded and sought after musician, he has toured extensively with numerous artists globally for more than 30 years. Supported or shared the stage with the likes of Tito Puente, Toots and the Maytels, The Satellites, Buddy Guy, Roger Hodgeson, Gloria Gaynor, Fergie, Chaka Khan, Natasha Bedingfield, Taj Mahal, Vintage Trouble, Keb Moe, Eric Gales, Ernest Ranglin, The SOS Band, Shannon and Melba Moore.

A Nova Scotian by birth, **Joe Bowden** moved to Toronto in the 1980's to pursue his music career at Humber College. He subsequently toured with the great vocalist, Salome Bey. Joe performed at the 1999 Barbados Jazz Festival with Eddie Bullen, alongside Luther Vandross and Wynton and Branford Marsalis. He has worked with some of Toronto's top jazz, R&B and pop artists: Divine Brown, Alana Bridgewater, Maestro Fresh Wes, Jackie Richardson, Rich Kidd and Dave Young, to name a few. Most recently, Joe has performed for four seasons as a member of the NBA Champion Toronto Raptors 6ixStix.

Joe also finds creative outlets in composing and arranging/mixing music. The new project, *Black to the Roots* is his fifth release, preceded by *Thank You For Listening*, which garnered him the Pioneer Award at the 2018 African Nova Scotian Music Awards. Joe was nominated for the 2021 African Nova Scotian Entertainer of the Year and Jazz Recording of the Year awards by the East Coast Music Association. In 2023, Joe was awarded the prestigious ECMA Bucky Adams Memorial Award.

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The listing below includes those whose support we received from November 1, 2022 to January 31, 2024. If we have inadvertently omitted your gift, please contact giving@londonsymphonia.ca and we will make it right!

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In honour of MJ & Ian Stone on the occasion of
their 55th wedding anniversary
In honour of Ultima PSWs
In honour of Ron Wexler's birthday

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The staff and volunteers of Metropolitan United Church, especially Rev. Dr. Jeff Crittenden, for welcoming us into this beautiful concert venue.

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Lenten Choral Music

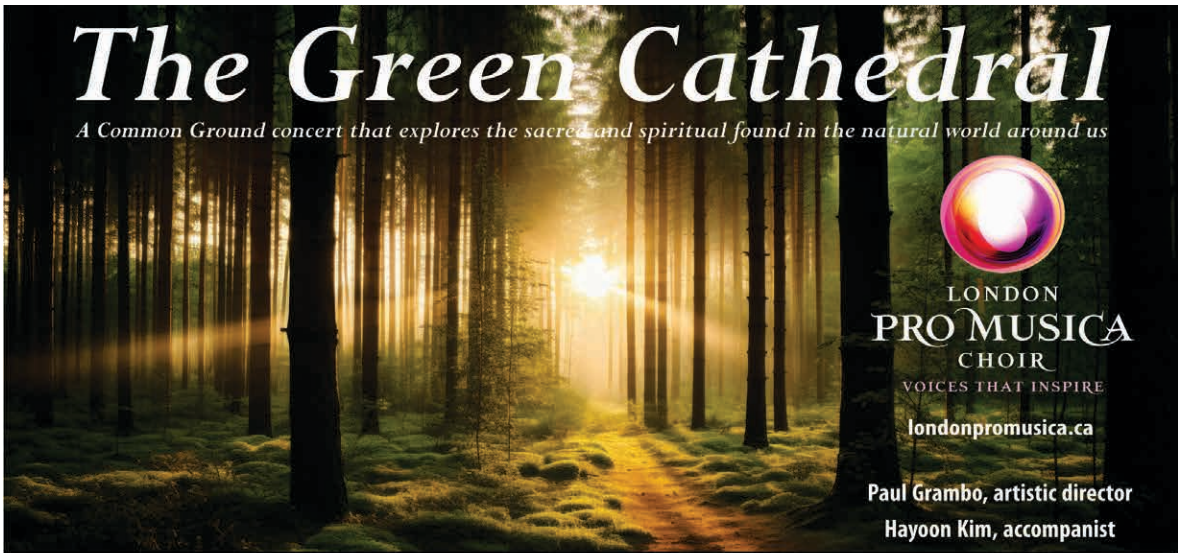


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Funded by:  Fondation Azrieli Foundation

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London 
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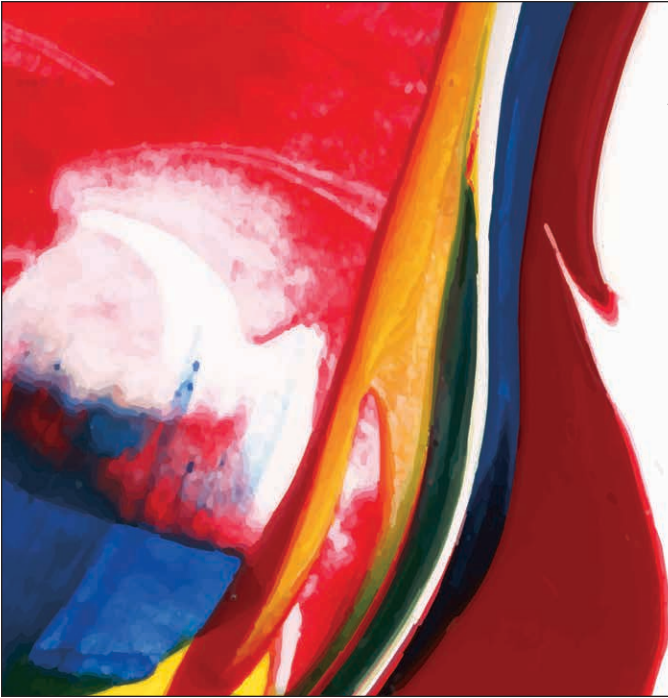


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at 7:30 pm

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Mark McAuley, *Director*

Greg Yantz, *Director*

STAFF

April Voth, *Executive Director*

Andrew Chung, *Artistic Producer*

Paula Calzonetti, *Fundraising Associate*

Janet Mowat, *Senior Marketing Consultant*

Scott Good, *Composer, Assistant Producer*

Jo-Dee Burbach, *Digital Communications Assistant*

Wendy Perry, *Administrative Assistant*

Rachael Hunter, *Front of House Manager*

Mila Todorova, *Bookkeeper*

Kate Stone, *Personnel Manager, Musicians*

Shawn Spicer, *Music Librarian*

Louise Good, *Communications & Fundraising Assistant - Volunteer*

ARTISTIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Joe Lanza, *Chair*

Graham Lord

Mikela Witjes

PRODUCTION TEAM

Jay Jacobs, *Production Coordinator*

Shawn Spicer, *Production Manager*

Mike Fisher, *Stream Studio, Video Content and Livestreaming*

Oleh Bilov, Sibomana Mujambi, Andre Deplonty, *Camera Operators*

Geoff Warder, *Livestream Sound Engineer*

Earl McCluskie, *Front of House Sound Engineer*

Rob Cairns, *Lighting*

Ethan Sue, *Livestream Titles - Volunteer*

Alex Drozd, *Stage Manager*

CONCERT POLICIES

- Photography and video/audio recording of any kind is not permitted during the performance.
- Photos are permitted before and after the performance and during intermission.
- Mask wearing is not currently required. Not everyone may have the same degree of comfort with the lifting of restrictions, and we ask that you please respect the personal space and comfort level of those around you.
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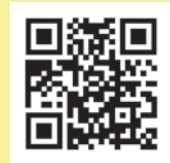
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Address: 289 Dufferin Avenue, London, ON N6B 1Z1

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